

The Baskerville Family

R e g d

The roman forms of 12 pt. Baskerville look like this on the brass letter patterns

b g e R

b g e R

R e g d

These bold letters show how the weight is added with identical set width retained

R e g d

Changed letter forms in the light italic preserve the set widths of the roman

b g e R

b g e R

R e g d

The added weight of the bold italic forms also preserves their flowing qualities

The four identical letter forms, shown above, are purposely left in reverse so that their characteristics of design may be more readily noted. The brass patterns which were proofed to make these reproductions, and the specimen lines which appear in the following pages, are about 10 picas high, base-line to cap-line. The above caption lines, beside each face, are set in the size and style of each set of patterns, again for comparative purposes.

To JOHN BASKERVILLE the graphic arts, and especially the book printers, are indebted for a type of graceful proportions and excellent readability. Type historians place Baskerville's types as the outstanding influence toward the change from old style designs (such as Janson and Caslon) to the "moderns" of Bodoni and the nineteenth century. Linotype Baskerville roman is "a weight-for-weight and curve-for-curve copy" of the original, not an adaptation with the loss of exact character which detracts from certain competitive faces.

Born in England in 1706, Baskerville was a mere boy when William Caslon began type-founding. The Dutch-English old style types were current equipment when Baskerville, in 1750, became interested in typography. We may surmise that he took up this new activity as a wealthy man's hobby, for he had been in his earlier years a writing-master and then a successful japanner, finishing trays, snuff boxes and the like with baked-on enamel, a process which had come to England via Japan.

Both of Baskerville's earlier activities had an apparent influence on his later approach to printing. As a writing-master he must have had a feeling for graceful letter forms, the outstanding quality of the types he designed later. In the japanning process he worked to attain highly polished surfaces and he later sought that physical quality in his book pages. He thus became the first great printer to exploit "plate-finished" papers.

With the ample proceeds of his japanning business, Baskerville entered the graphic arts on a broad basis. At Birmingham he built a paper-mill, a type-foundry, and a printing office, and he worked for several years before issuing any printed product. Making his own ink, as the early printers usually did, he thus controlled all the elements that determined the physical qualities of his books. All this has a definite bearing on our sales approach to Linotype Baskerville.

Says Updike: "What Caslon did for types, Baskerville, aided by the novel form of his letters, his black ink, and hot-pressed rag paper, did for eighteenth century presswork. His way of printing was so closely connected with the effects of his fonts that they cannot be considered apart from it." Thus we note here the procedure that he followed.

"In printing a book," (again Updike) "Baskerville had ready a succession of hot copper plates, and between such plates each wet sheet was inserted as it left the press—something no eighteenth century printer had attempted up to that time. The high finish of these hot-pressed sheets—the gloss of his paper—compared with that on modern papers, does not seem to us very noticeable. His contemporaries, however, thought otherwise."

After several years of experimenting and developing this new printing technique, Baskerville issued his first book in 1757. It was immediately acclaimed for its typographic qualities. His greatest book was the Baskerville Bible, issued in 1763. He carried on, as type-

founder and book printer until his death in 1775. Meantime he aroused jealousies among the contemporary printers and quite some controversy as to the readability of his more delicate types, as printed on his glossy papers, compared with the sturdier old style types on papers of rougher texture. Today we associate the Baskerville face with antique-finish book papers and our Linotype cutting, thus printed, is never deficient in readable "color."

Unlike the Caslon Foundry, which was carried on into our present day, Baskerville's foundry ceased operations with his death and his fonts of matrices were sold to close his estate. Some fonts stayed in England but more went to France. Through this latter disposition came the font which is the direct source of our Linotype Baskerville roman.

The Story of Linotype Baskerville

THE AUTHENTICITY of Linotype Baskerville, which is widely recognized as decidedly the best of the cuttings in this country, stems from direct reproduction of Baskerville's own matrices. A complete font, in approximately 14-point size, was discovered in Paris in 1929 by the American printer, William Edwin Rudge. As a lover of fine books, who worked with such men as Bruce Rogers and Fred Goudy, Rudge recognized the value of an original Baskerville font and negotiated its purchase. He then turned to Linotype to reproduce the matrices faithfully and thus make a true Baskerville available for slug composition. Rudge was then helping with his Linotype-set books, to build Linotype's typographic reputation, and the addition of the Baskerville, under such picturesque conditions was a further aid to both.

First introduced in 1931, Linotype Baskerville found immediate favor among the book designers and for various needs in periodical and commercial printing. In the records of the Fifty Books exhibits of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, Linotype Baskerville heads the list of Linotype faces used for 706 books, beginning with 1924 through 1951 (even though Baskerville wasn't introduced until 1931). In one year (1939), among the 31 exhibited Linotype-set books, 13 were set in this face. Five years later (1944), among 38 exhibited Linotype-set books, 12 were in Baskerville. Thus with the 28-year record of these annual selections we find a total of 112 books in this deservedly popular type.

Such popularity over a twenty-year period in this country naturally stimulated the competing machine-type manufacturers, with Intertype a close copier of the Linotype face while Monotype had reproduced the "interpretation" of Baskerville which had been made by their English company. Says the English writer Seán Jennett ("The Making of Books"—Faber & Faber, London, 1951): "Baskerville's type is today used very widely

in the ordinary run of book production; not for fine editions only, but also for the common cheap novel printed with no care or forethought. For the excellent typographic qualities of Baskerville have made it a stock face, now too commonplace for self-consciousness, and few printers dare be without some version of it."

For sales philosophy we may particularly admire that last phrase—"and few printers dare be without some version of it"—particularly when our Linotype version is so authentically based, well cut, and now usefully supplemented, for many typographic needs, with the Baskerville Bold.

Features of the Baskerville Design

TURNING the pages of the type specimen book, to compare designs, we find the Baskerville to be undoubtedly among the most graceful and genteel of all the types in current use. But it carries these qualities without any exaggeration of style or detail—in fact, so subtle is its design that no type-founder who has attempted to *adapt* it to his own version has been wholly successful.

The writer of these comments has chanced to read two books during the preparation of these notes—one of them in Linotype Baskerville, the other in the Monotype version. Both are well designed and excellently printed. The Linotype was pleasant and comfortable to read, but the Monotype made one conscious of an insistent sharp, wiry quality that was definitely less readable. This comparison, made with every effort to be impartial, is echoed in the comments of book designers who prefer our Linotype cutting. Undoubtedly some of this preference is due to a bit more weight as well as to the subtleties of design.

R e d g — this is 12 pt. Baskerville

R e d g — its companion light italic

R e d g — the related bold face design

R e d g — and the duplexed bold italic

For use in studying details of the Baskerville Family, the brass patterns for the 12-point sizes have been reproduced in about 48-point size to permit more ready recognition of the various elements. On the first page of this unit, four typical letters have been held in reverse in a larger size. They show, in addition to their various Baskerville characteristics, how the Bold and Bold Italic have been designed within the set width of the roman characters. This permits the use of the four variations on a mixer machine for textbook composition and the like.

I H J L T F E

The letters that use the simple vertical stroke show an interesting avoidance of mechanical regularity. One recognizes the results of the handwork in cutting the original punches, even though Baskerville obviously insisted on smoothing out many of the more apparent unevennesses that marked the Caslon types. The serifs on the I, and throughout the face, are not completely symmetrical (as in the Bodoni that followed).

H has eight serifs, no two of which are precisely duplicates.

The long stem of the J ends with an openly curved tail and a finial which approaches the ball shape of the modern types that followed.

The L and T are somewhat wider than normal. Note the heavier beak on the L, needed to prevent a "hole" in a composed word. The T is one of the identification letters for this face.

Both F and E are normal in shape but are in no sense mechanical in design.

V W Y X A K

V doubles without overlapping to become the W, with the stems gently rounded at vertex and apex. That treatment does not repeat *inside* the letters, where a sharply formed angle keeps the letters crisp.

The serifs through all these letters are slightly cupped.

In the Y and X the hairline elements have a bit of curve which adds to the gracefulness of the face. This echoes in the K.

A is less rounded at the apex than are the similar spots in V and W.

K is distinctive, another identification letter. Note how its upper arm is rather close to the stem, with a trace of curve as it drops, connecting with the stem well down. The lower arm takes off definitely from the upper and extends briskly, with some of the feeling of the R.

Z N M P B R S l i j f t r h m n u

Z, N, and M have sharper treatment of the apex and vertex than the V and W. Each inner angle is equally sharp.

The vertical hairlines of the N are perceptibly curved and are increasingly thickened as they approach the serifs. The latter, in both N and M, have virtually no cupped quality, as compared with the H.

P, B, and R have less similarity in the upper loops than in some other types.

In the B the upper and lower loops are quite contrasted in size.

R is another identification letter. Its loop is wide, while the rather extended tail, taking off close to the stem, extends to the right as an emphatic feature which is not duplicated in any of the generally used faces. The R and g are sure-fire clues in the identification of Linotype (or Intertype) Baskerville—but are slightly modified in the Monotype and ATF versions.

S is normal, with its spine extending firmly into the arcs.

O C G D Q U

The four round letters which echo the O are approximately circular but none is mechanically so. The O varies a bit in its subtle accenting and all the round letters reveal their hand-wrought origins.

The beaks on the C are in almost vertical alignment, with a pronounced cup in the lower.

G has no spur on its beak beyond an emphasizing of the intersection of the arc with the stem.

The serifs of the D echo the full swelling into the stem which marks the vertically stroked letters throughout this face.

Q is distinctive, in the Linotype cutting, and unlike the Q in any other Baskerville with the pronounced flourish of its swash tail.

U is somewhat wide, with a resulting squarish shape at the lower part of the letter.

Of course it is the lower-case letters which provide the readability of this face. Their forms are normal and their style comes with the details which reflect the freedom of the capitals.

Each stem that repeats part or all of the l stroke has a bit of freedom that avoids mechanical regularity. Many of the serifs are slightly cupped.

The f holds a full swing with a wide cross stroke and foot serif.

The t likewise swings freely at the foot. Note the taper in the stem and the difference between the f cross stroke and that of the t.

In the r, m, and n the stem curves back at the top, opening up the acute nick and giving a feeling of easy style. In the Caledonia design, Dwiggins picked up this idea very successfully.

The h, m, n, and u are harmoniously similar in their repeated n shape.

k v w x y z s a

The k holds scant tie-in with the capital K, except in the full tail. But v and w are much like the caps.

The x opens up generously, but y is more restricted, with a foot finial that is less positive than that of r or a.

The z and s are normal.

The a is rather distinctive in the manner with which the loop comes straight up diagonally to the stem. This letter varies in the different cuttings, with the Linotype a the most pleasing of the lot.

o c e b d p q g &

The lower-case o is similar to the cap and its characteristics repeat through the related round letters.

The *c* has a smallish ball terminal, with a perceptible thickening at the end of the lower arm.

A slight dip forward marks the *e* which has a high bar.

The stems of *b*, *d*, *p*, and *q* are all distinguished by individual variations in width and in their swelling into their serifs.

The *d* is marked by the forward swing of the stem below the bowl of the letter.

The *g* is a prime point for identification. While certain modernly designed faces have a *g* with lower loop left slightly open with a swash handling, no other of the more widely known and used faces has this trait, unless we except Cheltenham.

The ampersand is conventional in style in the roman.

I H J L T F E

For the designing of the Linotype Baskerville Italic, it naturally was necessary to make adaptations to the brass width of the roman letters. That procedure affected the lower case more than the caps, hence the production of the Special No. 5 lower-case italic which matches closely the rather compact quality of Baskerville's seven italic

J O H N B A S K E R V I L L E ' S T Y P E S
7 O H N B A S K E R V I L L E ' S T Y P E S

sizes, as shown in his specimen sheet of c. 1762. The italic caps, as supplied in standard Linotype two-letter matrices, are sloping versions of the roman forms. We provide in all fonts an assortment of swash characters which carry the free, swinging quality that must have come from John Baskerville's writing-master instincts.

In the above letters, which relate to the stem of the *I*, the width of serifs has not been curtailed perceptibly. The generous width of the roman letters provides ample width for the italic, even with the always-difficult *J*.

V W Y X A K

The *V* and *W* are held to traditional form, with somewhat curtailed upper serifs at the right. In the italic *W* a

center serif covers what might have been a difficult acute angle at the apex, a necessity which also moved Mr. Baskerville similarly.

Y and *X*, in the more attenuated italic, have straight hairline elements, as compared with the gentle curves in the roman.

The hairline of the *A* has been bowed outward slightly to avoid the congested counter which a straight line would make.

In the *K* the effect made by the tail of the roman *K* has been successfully held, but with a perceptible opening of the upper arm to meet the sloping procedure in the italic.

Z N M P B R S

The rather narrow version of *Z* in the roman becomes more apparent in the italic *Z*. The sloped roman *N* is a design-companion for the *M*, but if the typographer using Baskerville wants to attain a less formal feeling he uses the swash characters. Set in the style used by Baskerville himself, the following lines show the effect of the swash letters:

The *P* and *B* are counterparts of the roman caps.

The *R* changes from the roman with the use of the swash tail, with the tail taking off well away from the stem of the letter, quite different from the roman *R*.

The *S*, as designed for the Linotype face, has less mannerism than the original, being somewhat more open.

O C G D Q U

The letters based on the *O* are consistently sloped versions of their roman counterparts, and again the generous width of the roman helps the character of the italic.

The *Q*, almost always followed by *u*, is more faithfully reproduced in the swash *Qu* logotype. Note the difference in the example herewith.

Quaint Queens Quarrel

Quaint Queens Quarrel

Quaint Queens Quarrel

The *U* holds a bit of the squarish feeling of the roman.

l i j f t r h m n u

The italic lower case, as designed for regular two-letter matrices, is somewhat more rounded in feeling than the original Baskerville italic. The Special No. 5 italic lower case is about 13% narrower, but contains no differences in letter forms. Throughout the italic lower case the writing-master's tastes are evident, although the letters that echo the single stroke of the *l* are the simplest.

Only the *l* and *h*, in the above line, retain each a serif in the roman style. All the other finishing elements are calligraphic, thus producing the flowing freedom that is characteristic of this face.

k v w x y z s a

The *k* is formed with a pen-derived loop and a similarly formed swash tail.

The *v* and *w* begin with a pen touch and merely thicken on the opposite side instead of carrying a ball terminal.

The *x* is completed with pen-derived hooked finials all around. In many faces it would have ball finials on the hairline stroke.

The *y* has a v-shaped character rather than a prolonged stroke at the right as in some faces.

The *z* reverses the weight contrast in its strokes, as compared with the roman, and has two pen swashes.

The *s* and *a* are conventional.

o c e b d p q g &

The *o*, *c*, and *e* are conventional, and are echoed in the bowls of the *b*, *d*, *p*, and *q*.

The *p* has a pen-flourished start for its stem which adds distinctive flavor.

The *g* retains the open-loop distinction of the roman form.

The italic ampersand is one of the more highly stylized combinations of the written *e* and *t*, decidedly decorative, not very legible, but not to be mistaken for anything else.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The Baskerville figures are particularly handsome and decorative. They hold faithfully to the design features of the roman and italic alphabets. In the modernized treatment, figures 1, 2, and 0 are necessarily increased in height, which doesn't help their design.

Baskerville Bold and Bold Italic

THE GHOST of John Baskerville may have hovered over the drawing boards in the Linotype Matrix Department when the Bold and Bold Italic for this family were designed. He probably would have objected to *any* black-face type carrying his name—all of his personal influence as a typographer had been away from heavy types and to establish the rather pale and delicate face (compared with his contemporaries) which we are now studying. But he would have been bound to admit that the bold weights for his type were soundly and usefully designed.

Here is another of the design opportunities to retain alphabet lengths that permit combination punching. Note the characters *R*, *e*, *g*, and *d* as shown at the beginning of this unit—each weight, roman and italic, is designed to the same general set width. Thus the two-letter roman and bold is available when that combination is desired. Or the bold with bold italic, as used on

a mixer with roman, italic and small caps, provides an excellent dress for textbooks, catalogs, or general commercial composition.

Because the roman forms are comfortably wide, the addition of weight to make the bold is accomplished by working from the outside in, with no need to extend the set width. There are, however, all the necessary careful readjustments in this process of weighting, so that the character of the design is held throughout.

In the Caledonia Family unit we have noted how the original plan for that face contemplated a bold face and its italic to work in identical alphabet lengths with the roman. The previous experience with the Baskerville Bold had demonstrated how well this works out with a well-rounded, open face. And these two families are favored by the typographers because their members are designed for these varied combinations and uses.

Members of the Baskerville Family

LINOTYPE Baskerville has been considered and produced for body composition only, with a good range of sizes:

Baskerville with It. & S. C.—6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 point.

Baskerville (one-letter)—16 point.

Baskerville with Baskerville Bold—7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 point.

Baskerville Bold with Italic—7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 point.

A full variety of typographic refinement characters is made for the roman in all sizes except the 16-point for which f-logotypes are made.

Competitive Faces

THE AUTHENTICITY of Linotype's cutting of Baskerville has been stressed in the story of the origin of this face. The competition for slug-casting exists in an Intertype series which has the appearance of a poor copy of the Linotype face with some characters influenced by the ATF. Monotype's Baskerville Family comes from their English designs and, as noted previously, is thin and sharp, not so good as Linotype. The ATF Baskerville is hurt by somebody's effort to "refine" the design, thus robbing it of charm and style.

These competitive families are listed here, for convenient reference, in the sizes currently shown in the various specimen books:

AMERICAN TYPE FOUNDERS BASKERVILLE FAMILY

Baskerville Roman—6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 18 No. 1, 18 No. 2, 24, 30, 36, 48, 60, 72 point.

LINOTYPE SALES MANUAL

Baskerville Italic—6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 18 No. 1, 18 No. 2.

The 18-point No. 2 is an approximate 21-point with short descenders.

ATF Baskerville Italic has no swash characters. Like the roman, its design has been refined to its disadvantage.

ATF offers no bold or bold italic.

INTERTYPE BASKERVILLE FAMILY

Baskerville with It. & S. C.—6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 24 point.

The 18- and 24-point sizes have no small caps.

Baskerville with Bold—6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 point.

No bold italic. No typographic refinement characters, except Special No. 5 swash caps in light italic and Special No. 7 small caps, roman and italic.

LUDLOW—No Baskerville.

MONOTYPE BASKERVILLE FAMILY

Baskerville (No. 353) with It. & S. C.—for mach. comp.—6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 10¼, 11, 12 point.

Baskerville (No. 353)—for mach. comp.—14, 18 point.

Baskerville Italic (No. 353)—for mach. comp.—14, 18 point.

Baskerville (No. 353)—for hand comp.—14, 18, 24, 30, 36 point.

Baskerville Italic (No. 3531)—for hand comp.—14, 18, 24, 30, 36 point.

Baskerville Bold (Hess) (No. 453)—for mach. comp.—6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 point.—for hand comp.—14, 18, 24, 30, 36, 48, 60, 72 point.

No bold italic.

The Bold, designed by Sol Hess, Monotype's typographic director, has been "slicked up" to a degree that makes it remote from the true Baskerville design.

Sales Notes on Baskerville

PREFERENCES for the Linotype Baskerville, based on its excellent cutting from authentic sources, have been emphasized. Sheer typographic merit should relieve any directly competitive problem if one company's product is being considered against another.

While Intertype offers an 18- and 24-point, the whole Intertype cutting is definitely sub-standard against Linotype, both in design and particularly in fitting. An example is the cap Q—the Intertype makes it with a rather extended tail which forces the following letter (most often a u) so far to the right that the hole in the word is offensive to a good printer or discriminating reader. Linotype makes the Qu logotypes to meet that need.

CONFIDENTIAL [7]

Intertype makes more swash italic caps than Linotype—but they are not authentic in design and are apparently synthesized, partly from ATF and partly from other old faces.

Intertype's lack of a full assortment of typographic refinement characters as made by Linotype gives us an immediate advantage in the better plants. Book designers, who cannot often afford to use the refinement characters, have the discriminating eye to sense the better cutting of our entire Baskerville Family.

Monotype's cuttings, as mentioned before, stem from their English activities with this face and are unsuccessful attempts to *improve* John Baskerville's designs. The Bold by Sol Hess writes its own indictment if compared closely with our Linotype design.

The whole Baskerville Family, for a trade plant, book manufacturer, or general commercial plant—preferably using mixers—is a logical item of equipment. It is wise to sell both the roman and the bold face series when possible, otherwise the high alignment of this family may cause a problem in combining it with standard alignment faces.

Today's typographer may be amused with the John Baskerville printing procedure to attain highly polished pages. But he will print these types on any good antique or machine finished surfaces, usually finding them a bit pale for coated papers. They are well-adapted to offset

printing, but a bit fine in detail for good gravure reproduction.

When word-count is a prime factor, Baskerville stands fourth in the list of popular body faces, three of which are more extended, while eight are more condensed. The list of 10-point faces by alphabet lengths shows:

Janson	131 pts.	Bodoni Book	122 pts.
Scotch 2	131 pts.	Old Style 7	122 pts.
Caledonia	130 pts.	Garamond 3	118 pts.
Baskerville	129 pts.	Granjon	117 pts.
Caslon 137	129 pts.	Caslon Old F.	111 pts.
Electra	125 pts.	Cloister	110 pts.

If a prospective customer is selecting a body face to meet his own taste, the Baskerville is always a safe offer. Its box score in the Fifty Books exhibits proves that. But if some individual's taste doesn't happen to fancy the style of Baskerville, then the above table shows many alternative suggestions.

Let's repeat the remark of Seán Jennett, the English author: ". . . the excellent typographic qualities of Baskerville have made it a stock face, now too commonplace for self-consciousness, and few printers dare be without some version of it." Make it the Linotype version.