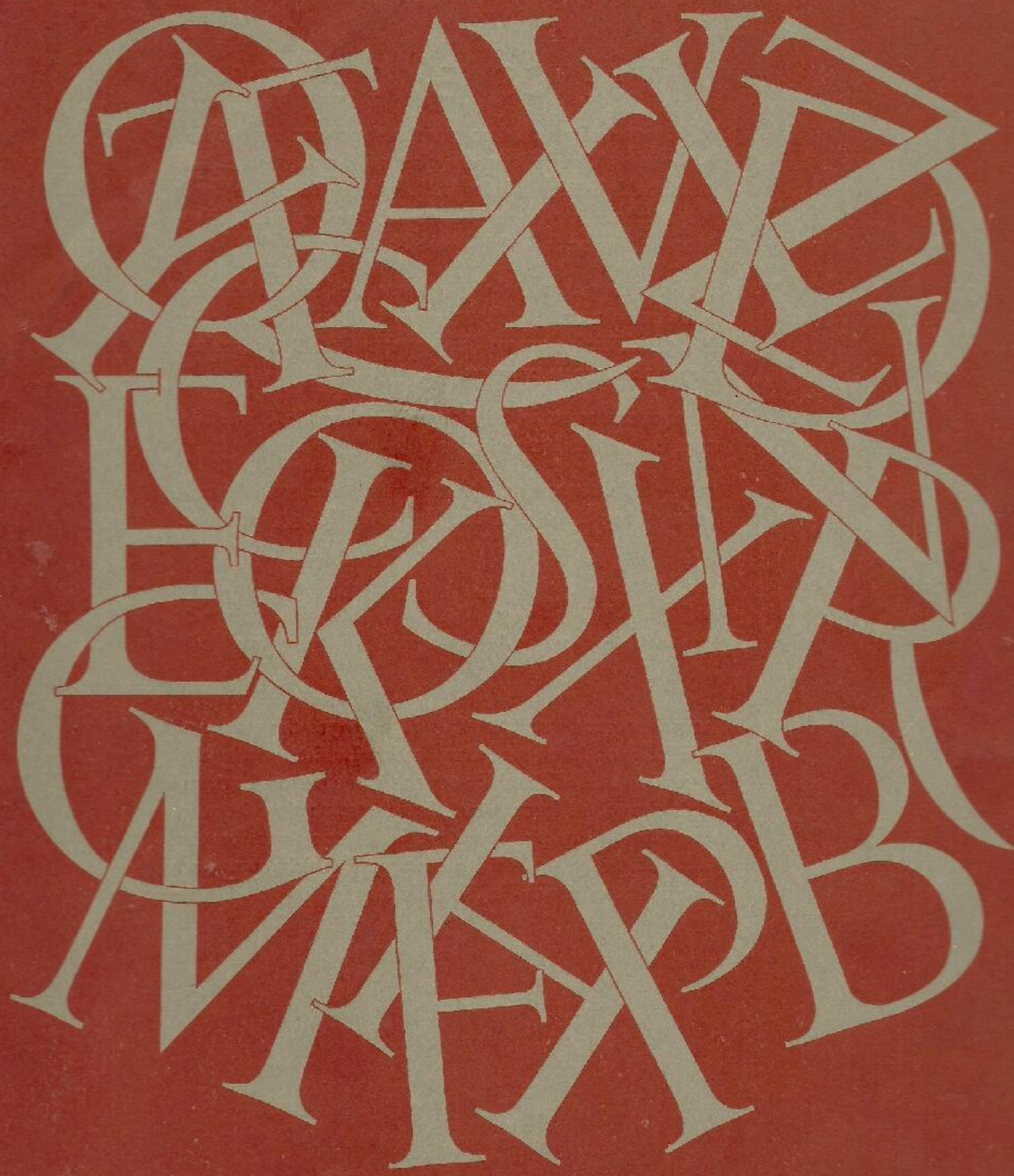


UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE

PAID PERIODICALS

# THE MONOTYPE RECORDER



APRIL-MAY 1931 CONTAINING THE FIRST DRAFT OF  
MR. J. THORP'S "NOMENCLATURE OF LETTER FORMS"

EGH

8 JUL 1931



## THE COVER DESIGN

of this issue of **THE MONOTYPE RECORDER** reproduces in woodcut facsimile a drawing of the Letters of the Roman Alphabet made by G. B. Palatino (*cir.* 1540) for a projected writing-book. We are indebted to Mr. Stanley Morison for the use of this wood-block.

**THE TITLE PAGE** and display type used in this number is the new **EXTRA-LIGHT** version of Gill Sans, Series No. 362. This is now available in sizes from 8 to 36 point; larger sizes are in progress.

**THE TEXT TYPE** is "Monotype" Baskerville, Series No. 169, in 8, 10 and 12 point.

**THE ORNAMENTS** on the title page are from a new series of 24 pt. border units. These are Nos. 553 and 554.



**ANNOUNCEMENT:** On May 14th, 1931, the name of The Lanston Monotype Corporation Limited was legally altered to that of **THE MONOTYPE CORPORATION LIMITED**. This simplified form, which has for some time been in current use amongst printers, will henceforth be the official title of the British Company which owns and manufactures the all-British "Monotype"



Job 90 £20

# THE MONOTYPE RECORDER

A JOURNAL FOR USERS AND PROSPECTIVE USERS  
OF THE "MONOTYPE"  
TYPE COMPOSING AND CASTING MACHINE  
AND ITS SUPPLIES

*Vol. XXX April-May 1931 No. 240*



TYPOGRAPHY: A STATEMENT OF POLICY p. 3

*Being a Foreword to an Essay:*

TOWARDS A NOMENCLATURE OF LETTER FORMS p. 7

By JOSEPH THORP

*with illustrative diagrams*



LONDON

THE MONOTYPE CORPORATION LIMITED

43 FETTER LANE, LONDON, E.C.4

MCMXXXI

# TYPOGRAPHY:

## A STATEMENT OF POLICY

To be in the position of manufacturing the only existing machine for automatically setting and casting separate types is to hold a serious responsibility to the world of fine printing. A generation ago the connoisseur of fine printing who could have predicted what part the "Monotype" would play in the growth of world-wide prestige of British typography, would have been considered a dreamer, if not a traitor to the century-long traditions built up by printers and typefounders.

Yet there were those who had such dreams; there were printers, designers and publishers to whom economy and efficiency were attractive, but only if they could be gained without sacrificing one single element necessary to good typography. There were readers who wanted less expensive printing, but would tolerate no distortion of individual characters to suit machine limitations. There were, finally, engineers who looked at the embryonic "Monotype" and found no inherent barrier—such as they found in other methods—to the production of pages equal in every respect of brilliance and fine design to hand-set pages produced in the greatest periods of printing history. In fact, they dared to claim for the machine more than the hand-setter would ever claim for his costly case-room: that is, the unfailing crispness and brilliance of new type for every setting, and a flexibility, evenness and subtlety of spacing within the line which was quite impossible when the spacing units available were no more than five.

Little by little the "Monotype" relegated the hand composition of books to the luxury, or private press; its latest triumph has been in even this uneconomic field, for if you wish to produce a book in one of the most beautiful existing type faces you may not be able to find a rival to "Monotype" Bembo—unless it be Eric Gill's Perpetua or Bruce Rogers' Centaur, and these too are "Monotype" faces!

In publicity printing the same encroachment upon "permanent type" has been taking place:

---

fifteen years ago no one would have believed the extent to which once-used "Monotype" material up to 72 point would replace often-used types. Here again the change has not been entirely dictated by the desire for economy nor even for speed. It is more true to say that the present position of the "Monotype" outside of those fields in which it merely reduces the cost and time of "bread-and-butter work" is due to the fact that the machine has one overwhelming advantage: it can cast perfect separate types.

### AN EPOCH-MAKING PROGRAMME

For the last ten years or more the Monotype Corporation, thoroughly aware of the responsibilities of its position, has set itself a typographic programme which is generally acknowledged to be the most ambitious ever attempted by any one group of individuals in typographic history. Every other decade in the history of the craft similarly marked by great creative activity has produced one, or at the most a few, type designs of general influence. The Monotype Corporation, secure in the realization that the machine could produce kerned f's and kerned italics, and that its matrix-case could accommodate all the varying widths of letters necessary to the perfect fount, deliberately searched the archives of fine typography since the Renaissance for those type faces of every successive



period which were the finest and the most useful to our own day. At the time when the famous "Monotype" gallery of classic faces was begun the printers in this country had but a limited range of designs to work with; outside the ephemeral faces, most of which were unfit for serious consideration, there were "Old Style" and "Modern" in various cuttings, but the "old" faces were all in the tight English tradition that followed earlier Dutch models, and the various "moderns" were by no means adapted to put poetry and dignity into a type composition. Printers were unable to use in ordinary commercial work the rich Renaissance capitals and lower case of Aldus Manutius, the sparkling neatness of Fournier's roman and *italic*, the delicate and almost whimsical design that we call Garamond. The letter of John Baskerville, surely the most perfect design that English printing has produced, existed only in the form of unworthy imitations by typefounders of the generation that followed the Birmingham writing master.

#### THE PERIOD OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

For almost exactly a century typography had suffered from the lapse into vulgarity and technical complacency which followed the masterly technical achievements of Bodoni of Parma in the Napoleonic era. It was truly felt that contrast and delicacy could go no further, and the post-Bodoni

period, confused by the sentimentalism of the romantic movement, produced such atrocities from the typefounders that typographers in self-defence were for the first time thrown back upon the resources of the past. Had there been such a complete and scientific revival of the best old type faces in the year 1850 as this decade has seen, it is probable that William Morris would never have started the Kelmscott Press, for he undoubtedly started it as a gesture of revolt against the pallid and perfunctory typography of his day. As it was, book and type designers alike became self-conscious and one-sided. Before a type could appear which should be a new and original addition to the history of letter forms, it was necessary to broaden the printer's whole horizon, to put into his hands not one or two but a dozen or more faces, each perfect of its kind, so that even the lay reader could become subconsciously used to beautiful printing without identifying it arbitrarily with the use of one fount.

THE FIRST great "Monotype" contribution to typography was this gallery of type faces, the previous heritage of the past. Bembo, the latest revival, in some ways sets the crown upon all previous efforts; it is so obviously the loveliest of all existing old faces that it seems incredible that it should not have been revived before—yet it is the very first old face ever designed.\*

THE SECOND CONTRIBUTION of the "Monotype" is that which has waited until now—that is, until the preliminary ground work had been laid down—for its successful initiation. After antiquity, modernity: Francesco Pastonchi, the Italian poet designed a letter based on pen forms, but quite unlike any typographic model of the past, and by special request produced by the Monotype Corporation. Now comes the Perpetua type designed by Mr. Eric Gill, on which a full critique may be read in Number Seven of the *Fleuron*. Here is found a letter related not only to the finest forms of the past but to actual national tendencies of our own country; a "cut" rather than a "written" letter, and one which has already taken its place amongst the permanent material on which good typographers will depend.

\* The neglect of the roman type which made its first appearance in Aldus's little book *De Aetna* (italic by Pietro Bembo) in 1495, is understandable when we realize that Aldus himself almost immediately re-cut the face so that it might better stand up to the crush of his primitive presses. *De Aetna* is now a rare book, but in every copy which can be seen in national collections the printing is of a brilliance and cleanness quite unusual in fifteenth century work, and certainly amazing for an Aldine edition. From this fact and

from the remarkable number of variant letters found on each page, it has been conjectured that *De Aetna* was issued as what we would call a "trial setting." It is certain that copies of the book, reaching the scholarly printers of Paris at the time when they were abandoning the black-letter and seeking the perfect form of roman, had immediate influence upon the work of Garamond and hence on every subsequent cutter of the old face letter.

Bembo is "Monotype" Series No. 270.



## TYPOGRAPHY: A STATEMENT OF POLICY

In most cases these designs have been produced without any guarantee of sufficient sale of matrices to justify the expense within five years. They have been produced because the gallery would have been incomplete without them. But one masterpiece after another could not have appeared had not something happened to the educated world since the war which justified the effort. This has been a recognizable movement on the part of educated laymen as well as printers and connoisseurs of printing for better typography and for a closer study of type faces.

Less than ten years ago fine printing still meant expensive limited edition printing, save in rare cases. The year 1923 changed our typographic history completely. The first fine "Monotype" faces appeared and enabled the Nonesuch Press to attain its sensational success in issuing beautiful books at popular prices. The *Fleurion* appeared, to gather up the body of intelligent public opinion which the *Imprint* had left without a spokesman at the beginning of the war. Thereafter every book came to be judged in terms of type faces, the one element by which typography stands or falls.

Type faces are like human faces. Some people are cursed by nature with the sort of face that makes it idle in advance to put on a jewelled head-dress. It is bad manners to make fun of ugly human beings for combining with the faces which they cannot help wearing the rich costumes that would suit handsomer folk. But it is only good sense to make fun of the designer who attempts by using hand-made paper, fine inks and perfect press work, to make a good page out of ugly letter-forms.

Yet what is the difference between a fine and an ugly letter? Is it, as the uninstructed are apt to think, merely a matter of taste?

## THE APPARATUS OF CRITICISM

It is extremely dangerous to discuss type in terms either of taste or of sentiment. Until the typographer knows his letters so thoroughly that he can draw each character from memory—until he can explain to the doubtful in terms of serif and curve, colour and inclination of stress, exactly how one fount differs from another—it is only confusing to embark upon metaphor or to fall back upon "instinct." A type that is not discussed in detail is not being discussed at all.

It is unfortunate, however, that discussion of type faces in exactly that detail which would be most helpful both to the technical and to the skilled professional has been seriously handicapped by the lack of anything like a working vocabulary. The word "serif" for example, is a very general term covering a multitude of special forms, any one of which group and identify a face. Nothing characterizes a letter more surely than the way in which its designer has disposed the thicks and thins—whether the greatest point of thickness comes at right angles to the line or whether it comes at another angle. Yet, incredible as it may seem, every writer on type design has been forced to make up his own terms as he went along and either trust to the readers' ability to apprehend him or waste a great deal of time in explaining his own terms. Two



#### THE MONOTYPE RECORDER

monographs published in recent years have made attempts to snatch at definitions in this country. One is the long study of the Garamond types by Mr. Paul Beaujon which appeared in the *Fleur* Number Five, the other is the article which formed the special number of the MONOTYPE RECORDER, September-October, 1927, dealing with the work of John Baskerville. We feel that students of type design throughout the world—from the ambitious apprentice to those masters of typography who are honouring us with their present collaboration—will welcome the essay in typographic nomenclature which we put before our readers in this number. The MONOTYPE RECORDER is, we know, read by practically all students of typography in the English speaking world, and by most of the leading foreign designers. It is for this reason that before issuing the accompanying article in separate form, and before proceeding with the use of those terms—in that critical analysis and description of our own type faces which would, we know, be welcome—we are submitting Mr. Thorp's nomenclature and drawings to our readers and inviting discussion and criticism.

We shall welcome correspondence on any point arising out of Mr. Thorp's article, which is based upon his very considerable researches both as a practical typographer and as a member of a Government Committee of Enquiry into legibility and choice of type faces. It is an indication of the rapidity with which effective typography has become the common enthusiasm of good printers and intelligent customers, that Mr. Thorp, while still in the prime of life, should be awarded the gratitude of craftsmen as one of the first and most efficient pioneers of spirited and self-respecting commercial printing. His text-book, *Printing for Business*, has never been superseded as a layman's initiation into the possibilities of print; nor, as may be seen, have his brilliant literary excursions robbed typography of a staunch and valued defender.

Nothing in the following article is put forward as final, but when we have heard from our interested readers and are assured of the critical approval of the foremost typographic writers of our day, we hope to establish some definitions of real and immediate value.

TOWARDS A  
*Nomenclature*

FOR LETTER FORMS

By

JOSEPH THORP

*Author of Printing for Business, etc.*

WITH ILLUSTRATIVE DIAGRAMS



# TOWARDS A NOMENCLATURE FOR LETTER FORMS

By JOSEPH THORP

## PREAMBLE

**T**HE following is an "essay towards a nomenclature" for letter forms, which nomenclature being logical, concise, unambiguous and easily memorable, shall be acceptable to and readily intelligible by the related craftsmen—calligraphers and letter designers, sign-writers and letter-carvers, type-founders, engravers, printers and typographers; as also their intelligent employers—for the instructed amateur really hates the "thingumajig" terminology to which he is often reduced. We need, in fact, an accredited terminology for the description, identification and discussion of letters and types of varying character.

Some research into this matter and consultation with knowledgeable practitioners and serious students in the various branches of letter-making and letter reproduction convinces me that some attempt ought to be made to reduce an existing confusion, a confusion not profound and therefore remediable; an unnecessary, irritating and time-wasting confusion.

I have attempted here no more than to collect, collate and select the most reasonable of the existing terms, to eliminate unnecessary or obscure variants

and to suggest the fewest possible amendments or additions.

Each trade or craft inevitably develops its own terminology and jargon. The terminology of the printing and type-founding trades is, after the common fashion, built largely upon metaphor—a good and obvious example being the *body, face, beard, shoulder and feet* of a printing type.

We are not here concerned explicitly with *type*—that is, with the metal unit—but with the *impression* of the type, the form of the letter as drawn, painted, carved or printed. And here the printer, who has become the dominant craftsman concerned with letters, can contribute a whole bagful of generally acceptable metaphors from human, animal and inanimate sources—*heads, feet, arms, eyes, ears; beaks, tails, spurs; stems, bowls, bars, and brackets*. We find also some clearly intelligible descriptive terms such as *ascender, descender, condensed, expanded; full-bodied letter; hair-line*; technical terms such as *serif* and *counter*; and jargon terms like *swash* which are generally understood and may be here accepted without discussion.

## FUNDAMENTAL CONSTRUCTION OF ROMAN CAPITALS

The elements of construction of the letters known to us as Roman *capitals*, and of the *lower-case* letters both roman and italic (formed from a cursive adaptation of the capital letters which was evolved by the calligraphers) are the line and the circle—which is something more than saying straight and not-straight lines.

(In the Italic the circle becomes the oval and many of the "straight lines" (as *A, x*) slightly curved, but there is a general correspondence of form.)

We see here in Figure 1 the 13 straight-line forms of the Roman capitals—full strokes, and full and short strokes in combination.

I V W N X H M T L Z A F E Y K

Fig. 1



In Figure 2 we note how the full round form O is modified to make C, G and, of course, Q; and how D, B, P, R and S are formed of straight lines and circles

combined. The remaining letters, J and U are merely slight modifications of the two letters I and V, to represent modifications of the sounds of those two letters.



Fig. 2

Figure 3 shows the same circle, line and line-circle

combination in the lower-case letters.

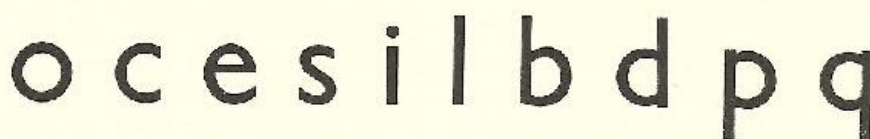


Fig. 3

In practice the O and H are considered the basic units of the alphabet or type. The O determines the width of the letters according as the "circle" is narrowed (*condensed*) to an upright oval or widened (*expanded*) to an oval whose major axis lies horizontally. And from the two letters together we can determine the width of the stems, the proportion between thicker and thinner parts of the curved members and the character of the scrifs of a given matched set of letters and symbols.\*

With our main purpose steadily in view, we must, in establishing our apparatus of description, discussion, identification and comparison, depend rather upon the eye than the scale-rule and micrometer, deal often with apparent rather than actual measurements and forms, and use precise terms such as circular, oval, vertical, horizontal, not in an absolutely mathematical but in an approximate and practical sense.

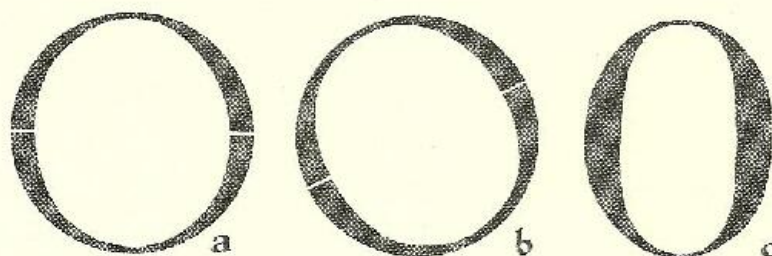


Fig. 4

In Figure 4, for instance, if Oa were reduced to the scale of, say, 10-point type, it would not be easy to decide whether the outer curve was a true circle or the inner a true oval. It can, however, be fairly described as a circular ("apparent") form in contrast with Oc.

It will also be clear that a line joining the points of maximum stress will be horizontal; and this fact may well be described as *horizontal stress*. The description of

the letter Oa will then run O—*circular; horizontal stress*.

As to Ob (if it were much reduced) for all that the eye could tell both its outer and inner curves might be ovals with their major axes both inclined to the left, the inner axis appreciably, the outer but slightly. What is *apparent* is that the O is circular and also has an apparent tilt to the left. As this apparent tilt is due to the fact that the points of maximum stress do not fall

\* This clumsy but intelligible circumlocution is adopted to avoid the term *fount* which narrows the field, or *alphabet* which is inaccurate.

rate and inadequate. But it will be tiresome always to be so explicit. Loose terms can be employed when the context makes all clear.



on a horizontal line the sufficient description of the letter might be "O—circular; heavily biased stress."\* Oc could be described "O—oval; horizontal stress."

It will be convenient here to recall that letters are constructed and arranged on a frame-work of hori-

zontal lines—three lines, which we may reasonably call the *base-line*, the *cap-line* and the *mean-line*. One might add ascender-line and descender-line, but these, unlike the three mentioned, have no exactly determined position.

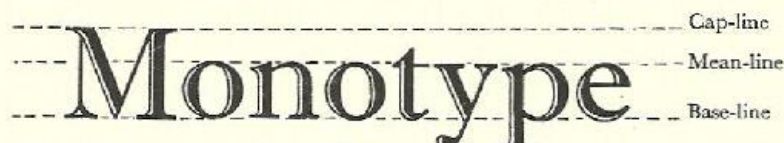


Fig. 5

## THE ROUNDED FORMS

The rounded forms O Q o d b g a etc. ("rounded" here is a loose term to include *oval* as well as *circular*) are traditionally called *bowls*—an acceptable term which is conveniently extended to include the "sheared" round

forms (see Fig. 20) and the corresponding italic forms.†

We note, regularly in B D P R and frequently in C G (and often in their l.c. forms) that the *bowl* is flattened before it joins the *stem*.

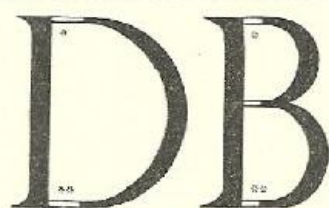


Fig. 6

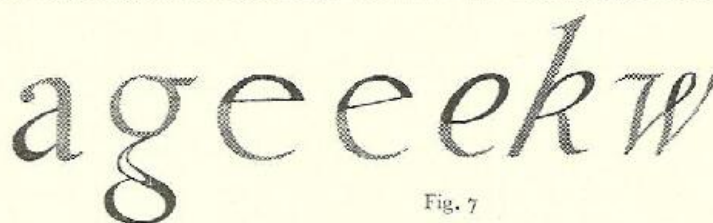


Fig. 7

A convenient term for this flattening will be the *flat of the bowl*, while the rounded part (or any portion of it, as the context may determine) is aptly termed the *arc of the bowl*: the point marked \* (Fig. 6) to be described as junction of bowl with head of stem; \*\* with foot of stem.

There are special rounded forms (Fig. 7) for which the term "loop" is indicated. (The Italic *a* has obviously a *bowl*, not a *loop*).

\* This factor of stress, horizontal or biased, is important in describing the character of types and of individual letters in a related alphabet. The biases do not necessarily fall according to a uniform plan. The c and e, for instance, have often a heavily biased bowl where the o is apparently unbiased.

There is, however, another beguiling aspect of this factor of stress which invites one to further efforts towards precise description. If Oc (Fig. 4) be contrasted with Oa and Ob it is obvious that the passage from thin to thick is abrupt in Oc, gradual in Oa and Ob. One might then be tempted to label Oc—"abrupt stress"; Oa and Ob—"gradual stress." But this would only have an absolute (in the terms of this thesis a "roughly" absolute) value if the ratio of the thickest to the thinnest part of the "circle" were fixed. Clearly the greater the difference between thick or thin, or, alternatively, the more condensed or narrowed the circle of the

The main curved member of S may be conveniently termed the *spine*. S, then, consists of a spine with an upper and a lower arm.

The Roman l.c. g gives more scope for variety of treatment than any other roman l.c. letter, and is generally an identifying letter of any fount. It will be



O is, the more abrupt the stress. The complications are obvious. It would seem therefore against the spirit of this adventure, which essentially is an effort towards simplification, to pursue this interesting matter further.

† Clearly also we are not exclusively or even primarily dealing with geometrical circles and ovals. Freedom of drawing is what commonly gives character to letters. While the eye demands that stems thick or thin should all be straight and uniform, the arcs of bowls on the other hand are flattened, sharpened and variously stressed except in the more mechanicalized forms of letters—which, however, can have their own beauty as is manifest in the admirable sans-serif letter of Mr. Eric Gill, the beauty of which is due to the unerring instinct for right proportion in this architect-engraver-sculptor.



found convenient then to distinguish explicitly four definite parts of the lower-case g—the *bowl*, the *link* (the white part of the g in Fig. 7) the *loop* and the *ear* (*v. infra*). The actual point where this *link* (or connecting stroke) ends will be necessarily undeterminate, but this terminology will allow us clear descriptions of the various types of g. As for example:—

CENTAUR g. Large, biassed bowl; sharp-angled link *Horizontal*; flat loop; *Vertical*-sheared ear, *Horizontal*.

BASKERVILLE g. Flattened *Horizontal*-stressed bowl; link *Horizontal*; curved ear, pear-terminal.

PERPETUA g. Large bowl *Horizontal*-stressed, round-angled oblique link. *Horizontal* ear; sheared *Horizontal*.

PLANTIN g. Medium bowl, *Horizontal*-stressed; heavy link *Horizontal*; hair-lined lower arc of flat loop; concave-curved ear, sheared *Vertical*.

PASTORCHI g. Small bowl; biassed stress; long oblique link. Curved ear, sheared *Left*; open loop.

GARAMOND g. Large bowl; *Horizontal*-stressed; acute-angled link, slightly oblique; small, curved, "blob" ear, appreciably below mean-line.

It is not supposed that letters would often need to be described with this fullness of detail, but it is suggested that our simple terminology can, when necessary, describe with sufficient explicitness the characteristic features of any letter.

## THE STRAIGHT LINE FORMS

The straight lines used in letter formation are *vertical*, *horizontal* and *oblique*; *full* or *short*—*full* here meaning full in its own sphere.

i w k y Y (Fig. 8)

In Fig. 8 all the straight strokes of w and i are *full*; the vertical stroke of k is *full* while the two oblique strokes are *short*. Both strokes of the y are *full*. All the vertical strokes in both capital and lower-case letters of the Roman alphabet are *full*, except Y. No horizontal strokes of either are full.

## STEMS, ARMS, TAILS, BARS AND CROSS-STROKES

We can, this noted, define as *stems* of letters *all* vertical strokes (including that of Y) and *all* full oblique strokes (Fig. 9).

A B D E F H I  
M N P R T V  
W X Z J J U

Fig. 9

The black strokes of these Roman caps. are stems in accordance with our definition. We may conveniently include the full stroke of the J (a stem-with-terminal) and both members of U.

Of the lower-case letters the dark strokes (Fig. 10)

b d i k l p q r  
u v w x z

Fig. 10

fulfil our definition of stems; while these dark strokes in Fig. 11, with curved terminals (*v. infra*)

a f m j n t u

Fig. 11

will also rank as stems. The long (light) stroke of y is also logically a stem-with-terminal rather than a *tail*—which may aptly be defined as a short *downward* oblique or curved stroke. The dark strokes of Fig. 12



K R Q k

Fig. 12

are *tails* according to our definition.

The curved part of the stems of a m n t and u

a m n t u

may be termed the *arc* of the stem. The Italic letters will, *mutatis mutandis*, readily conform to our definitions.

*Arms* may be defined as *projecting* (or unclosed) horizontal or short *upward* sloping strokes as in

E F L T Y Z K k z

to which we may usefully add by obvious analogy

C G S c s

*Bars* are closed horizontal strokes

H A e

excluding the short closed horizontal strokes joining the bowls of D B P and R, etc., to their stems which we have termed above "*flat of the bowl*."

Cross-strokes are short strokes *cutting across* stems as in f and t

f t

## GRACES AND FINISHING STROKES

So far we have dealt merely with the fundamental structure of the letter. We must now approach the formal graces and refinements of letter making—*verifs*, *beaks*, *terminals*, *ears*, *spurs* and "*swashes*." A few more

precise terms will be necessary. The dark parts of the following letters may be appropriately named *heads* and *feet*. *Apex* will serve for the points of juncture of the stems of A M V W v w.

A B D E F H I J K L M N P

R T U V W Y a b d f h i j k

l m n p q r t u v w x y

a b d h i j k l m n p q r t u v w x y



The heads and feet of stems and the open ends of arms (and, occasionally of tails) have commonly finishing strokes termed *serifs*, forms which were, happily, taken over by the calligraphers and early punch-cutters from the Roman letter-carvers—with modifications as the new craft developed, and as the tools of the new craft dictated.

The forms of serifs have much to do with the varied characters and the identification of types.

The attempt, however, to group types into families entirely on the basis of a classification by serifs may be said to have definitely broken down. It is doubtful also how far the terms—old face, old style, and modern are now used in a precise and intelligible sense. Old style

would seem now to be no more than a period, not a descriptive term to express a pre-Bodoni type; modern a post-Bodoni. Old style seems to indicate no more than a post-Bodoni type aiming at the “feeling” of an old-face. There are obvious obscurities and diversities of meaning in the terms *Gothic*, *Antique*, *Latin*, *Italic*, *Elzevir*. Sans-serif is obviously a better term to connote unserified letters than *grotesque* which may more fittingly apply either in a vaguely descriptive or in a derisive sense to many existing types of letters.

These obscurities and inconsistencies do not however affect the present project—which is concerned with the specific, not the generic, classification and description of letter forms.

## THE SERIF

The serif is fundamentally a line drawn at right angles to, or obliquely across, the ends of stems and arms (and, occasionally, tails)—a line extending beyond them either on one or both sides.

The plain-stroke horizontal serif may be seen in these forms

I B M W w

w b d h i

I B M W

The plain horizontal stroke serif is called a slab serif (in its lightest form a hair-line serif).

In Fig. 13 we have *heavy-slab*, *fine-slab* and *hair-line* serifs.

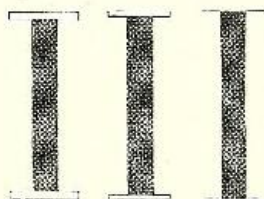


Fig. 13

And the plain slab serif appears in these lower-case Roman and Italic forms:—

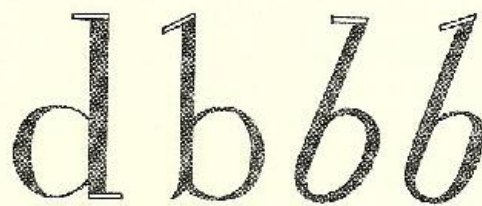


Fig. 14

The angle or angles between the serif and the stem may be filled in to a less or greater degree. This filling is appropriately termed a *bracket*—appropriately because of its shape and also because it does in fact support the serif of an actual metal type and tends to prevent it breaking away.

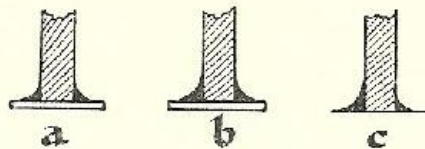


Fig. 15

In Fig. 15 we have at *a* a fine-bracketed, at *b* a full-bracketed, serif. The serifs at *c* may be described as *bracketed-to-point*, *full* and *bracketed-to-point*, *fine*.



In Fig. 16a certain common lower-case forms of serifs are diagrammatically analysed (fairly enough) as *slab-serifs*, *bracketed*; including a concave and a convex *slab*. The four lower-case stem-forms in Fig. 16b (a—d) may be fairly described as “*bracketed-to-point*.” The forms e and f are obviously not bracketed; that is, the angle between the serif and stem remains a right angle: “*wedge-serifs*” is suggested.

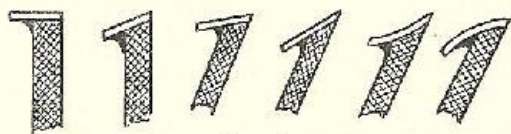


Fig. 16a

Of normal *head* and *foot* serifs there remain to be noted the hooked head and tail serifs of Italic lower-case letters (Fig. 17) (also often found in the a d and u of the Roman lower-case forms), which, as they are not true *serifs*, would be best described as *hooked head finial* and *hooked foot finial*.

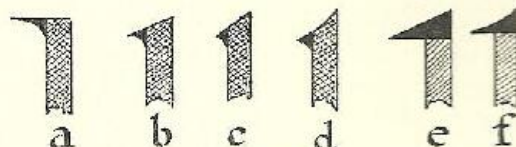


Fig. 16b



Fig. 17

## THE SERIFS OF ARMS

The serifs of the heads and feet of the stems of letters are formed with reference to an orderly and flowing finish on the framework lines (*cap*-, *mean*- and *base*-).

The serifs of *Arms* have no such reference. We find a type of serif both on straight (E F T, etc.) and curved

**E F T C G S**

Fig. 18

*Arms* (C G S) which seems to be formed by a plain

stroke, either *bracketed* or *unbracketed*.

The serif of the middle arm of the E in Fig. 18 and of the lower arm of the G are so obviously of normal serif form that there is no point in giving them another classification.

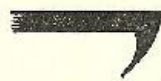
The *serifs* of the two long arms of the E might also fairly be considered as one-sided *bracketed* serifs. A convenient name (*beak*) has however been long current to describe the types of arm-serifs in Fig. 16, and we can accept it without misgiving.



Vertical, bracketed beak



Wedge beak; right



Beak, curved-left



Spurred wedge beak; right



Fine pointed spurred beak; right



Fine pointed spurred beak, curved-left

Fig. 19



For the obviously barb-like type of the serif in Fig. 19a the term *barb* seems a better term than "cat's ear": further particularization can be added—as *sharp* or *blunt*, *heavy* or *fine*, *right*, *left* or *vertical*.



Fig. 19a

There is also a clearly-defined and common type of finish to the arms of the rounded forms C G S c and s

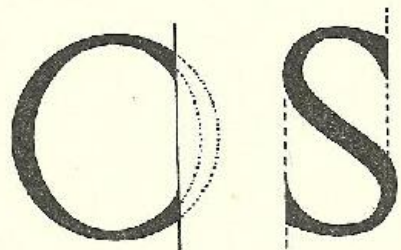


Fig. 20

when the terminal is not a true serif form, that is, not formed by a cross line extending beyond the member.

In Fig. 20 the ends of the arms of the C and S are formed by an imaginary line shearing through the bowl of the foundation Os; and it would seem to be more logical to call this finish a "*sheared terminal*" rather than a *beaked serif*. This description would also apply when the shearing is not through a symmetrically formed imaginary O but where the arms of the C G S c s have been (as they are so often) flattened, as here.

C (POLIPHILUS)—flattened arms, sheared terminals; right.

C (PLANTIN)—sheared terminals; vertical.

## TERMINALS

We have been using the word *terminal* to describe arms and stem-endings to which the word *serif* cannot be appropriately applied. The dark parts of the letters in Fig. 21 would be fittingly called terminals.

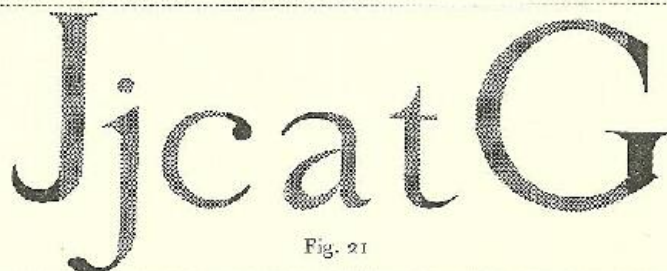


Fig. 21

## "EARS" AND SPURS

"*Ear*" is an obvious term for the finishing strokes of g and r; and *spur* an appropriate name for the slight excrescences such as those on the T and the *bracketed-to-point* serifed terminal of the lower arm of G (Fig. 21a).

It is submitted that here is a reasonable and reasonably explicit nomenclature, carrying for the most part its meaning at first hearing. It is in the main a summary of already widely accepted terms with modifications here and there in the direction of greater precision and simplicity.

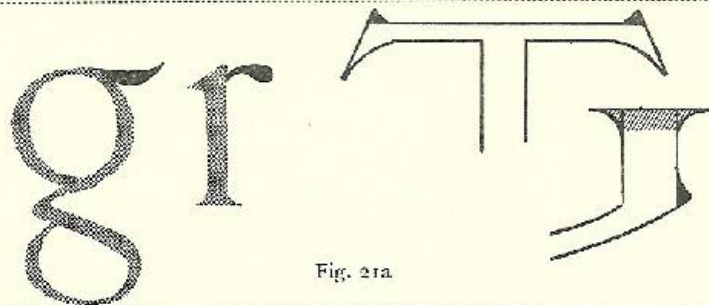


Fig. 21a

It is assumed that further particularity of definition can be attained by plainly descriptive terms which do not need to be formally stated or accepted as part of an established nomenclature. For instance the type of

tail in Mono.-Baskerville Q might recognizably be called *scythe-tailed*; while *claw-tailed* would describe the tail of this Q.

In referring to the centres of letters (to describe the



positions of *bars* or the points of junction of bowls and arms to stems) we shall note the *apparent* rather than the actual centre.

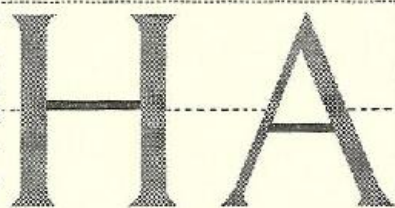


Fig. 22

In the H and A of Fig. 22 the bars of both are at the *apparent* centre.



Fig. 23

A useful and obvious term for describing the curves emphasised as in Fig. 23 will be "double curve."

A summarised glossary of terms used in this essay is attached for the convenience of readers.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS ESSAY

**ARMS:** Projecting (or unclosed) horizontal or *short, upward-sloping* strokes (E, L, etc.).

**ASCENDER:** Part of lower-case letters extending above the mean-line (*q.v.*) (l, k, etc.).

**BARs:** Closed horizontal strokes (H, A, e).

**BARBS:** Barb-like endings to arms.

**BASE-LINE:** The lowest of the three (imaginary) framework lines (base-, cap- and mean-) on which letters are constructed.

**BEAKs:** Beak-form endings to arms.

**BIASSED STRESS:** Where the points of maximum stress in a bowl lie in an oblique line (Fig. 4).

**BOWLS:** Fully rounded (oval and circular) forms complete as in O o, modified as in D B d b a (see also *loop*).

**CAP-LINE:** The topmost of the three (imaginary) framework lines (cap-, mean- and base-) on which letters are constructed.

**CONDENSED LETTER:** A letter of a series planned from a basic o which is a narrowed oval, not a circle.

**COUNTERs:** The "inside shapes" of letters.

**CROSS-STROKES:** Short horizontal strokes cutting through a stem (f, t).

**DESCENDER:** Part of letter extending below the base line (q, p, etc.).

**EAR:** The small stroke springing from the bowl of g and the stem of r.

**EXPANDED:** A letter of a series planned from a basic o which is a flattened oval, not a circle.

**GRADUAL STRESS:** Where the passage from thick to thin of a stroke is gradual.

**HAIR-LINE:** The fine line in a letter—a relative term.

**HORIZONTAL STRESS:** Where the points of maximum stress of a *bowl* lie in a horizontal line (Fig. 4).

**LIGATUREs:** Letters "tied"—cast together in one unit of type—ff, ct, etc.

**LINK:** The stroke connecting the bowl and loop of g.

**LOOP:** Special rounded forms not of a circular or formal oval character as in the lower part of g.

**MEAN-LINE:** The middle line of the three (imaginary) framework lines (mean, base and cap) on which letters are constructed.

**SERIF:** Embellishment of the ends of stems, arms (and tails) of letters. Sub-divided into *slab*; *slab-bracketed*; *bracketed-to-point*; *hooked*; and *wedge*.

**SHEARED TERMINALS:** Endings to arms formed by an imaginary shearing stroke.

**SPINE:** Term for the main member of S s, excluding the arms.

**SPUR:** Slight swelling often added to serified arms of T Z and lower-arm terminal of G.

**STEM:** All vertical strokes and full length oblique strokes (*full* for caps. means from base to cap-line; for lower-case letters from base to mean-line or beyond).

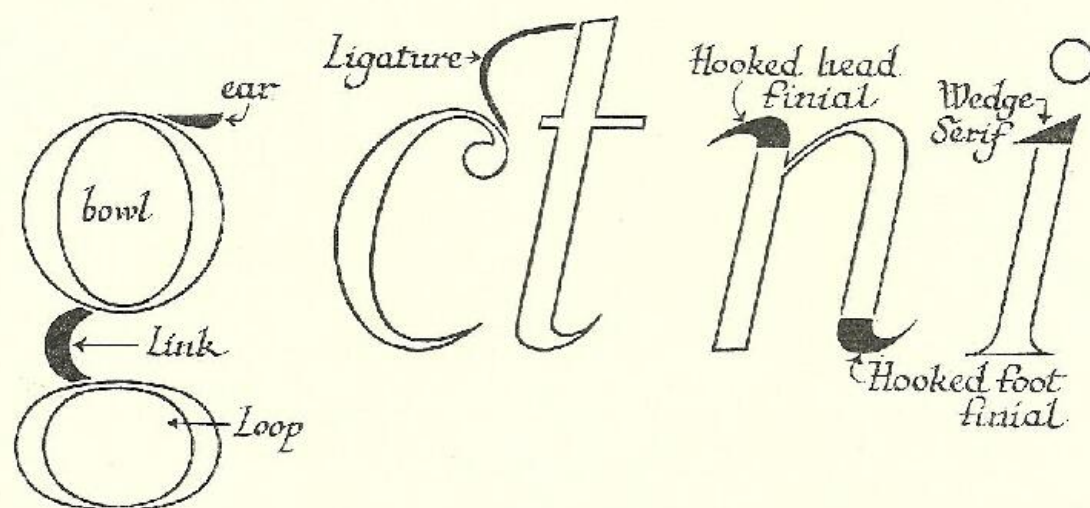
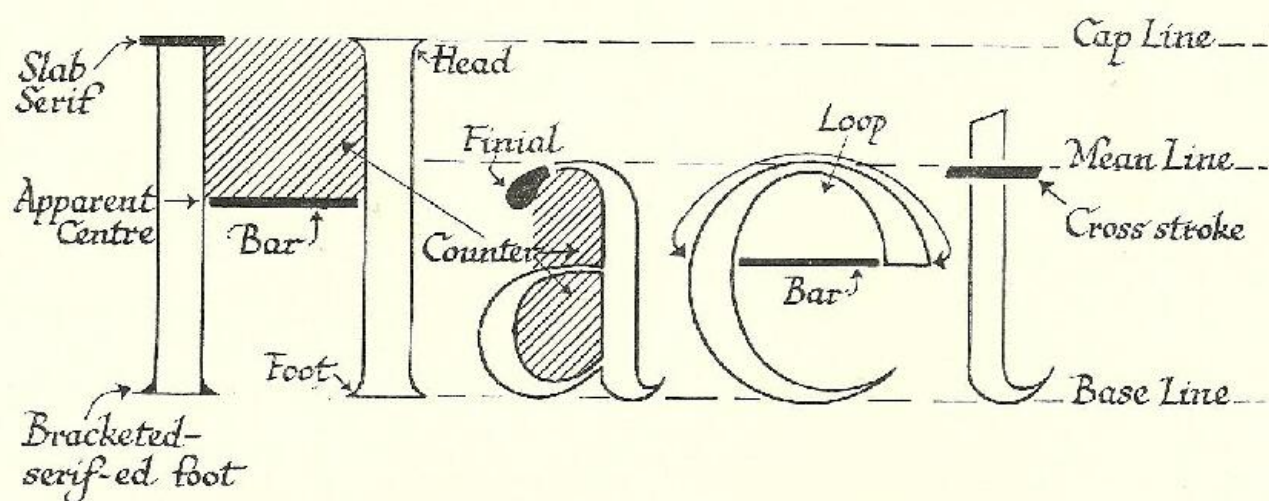
**STRESS:** Term to express thickening of the stroke of a curve (*vertical stress*, *biased stress*, *abrupt* and *gradual stress*).

**SWASHES:** Technical jargon for *flourished* tails and terminals of letters.

**TERMINALS:** Ends (or beginnings) of strokes other than serified ends (or beginnings).

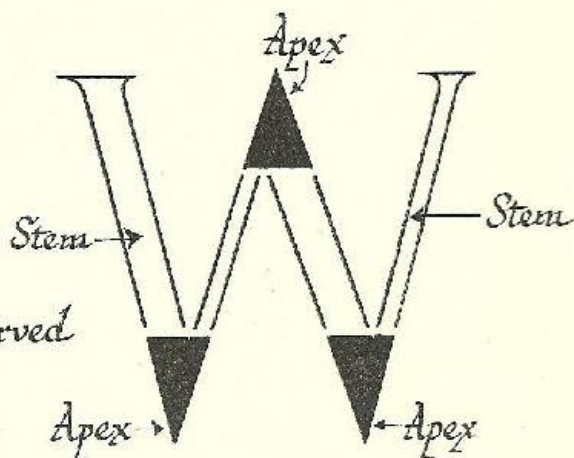
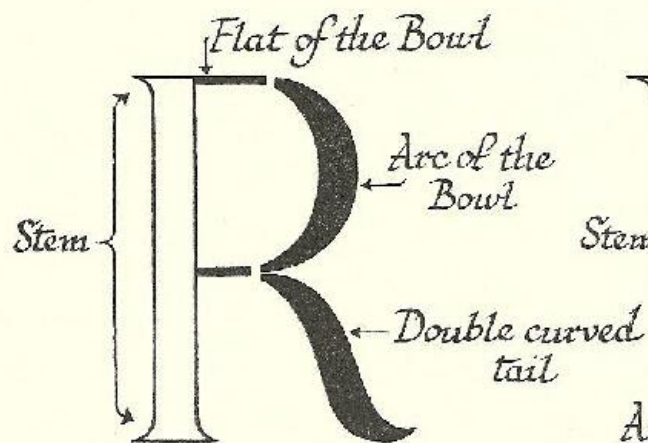
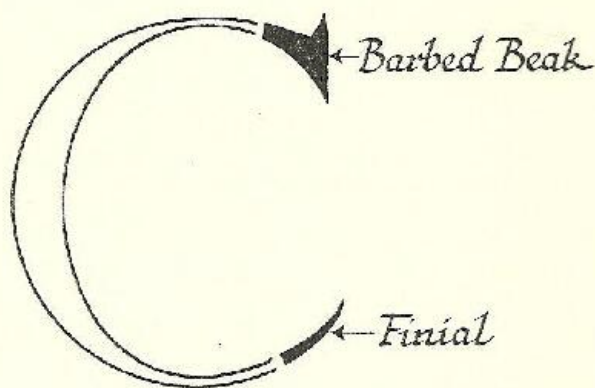
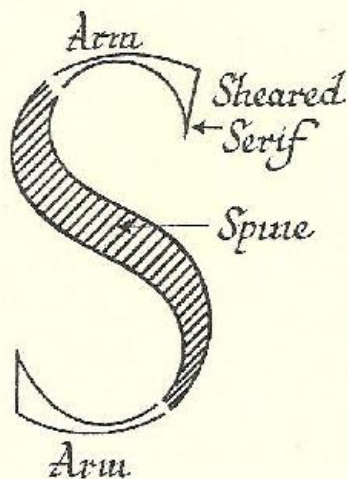
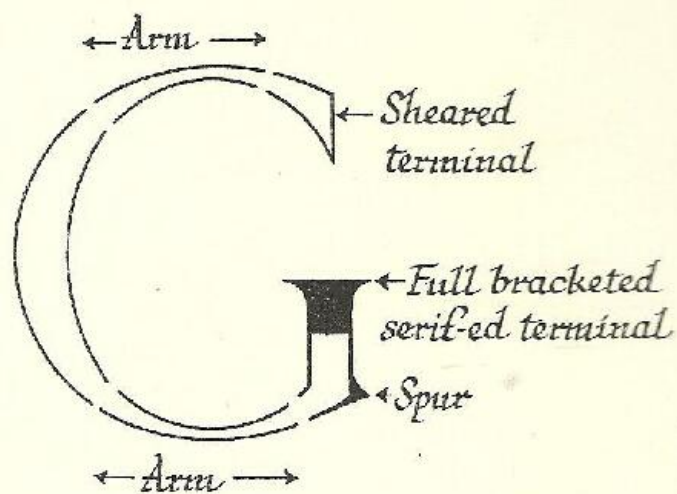
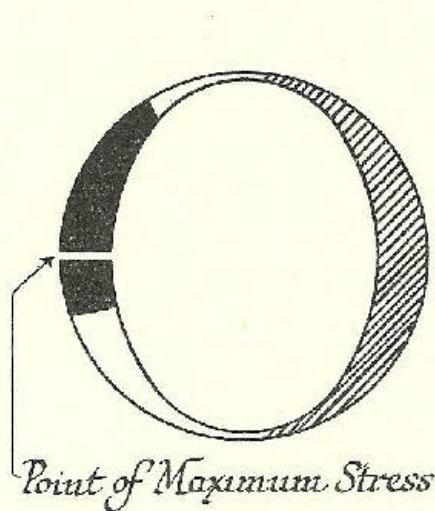


# SUMMARY DIAGRAM





# SUMMARY DIAGRAM





# THE MONOTYPE CORPORATION LIMITED

43 Fetter Lane, London, E.C.4

Telephone: Central 8551-5

Representatives of the Monotype Corporation stand ready at any time to advise on methods of increasing output, special operations, etc., of the "Monotype" and its supplies, and to furnish specimens, trial settings and advice on new type faces

## PROVINCIAL BRANCHES

BRISTOL	West India House, 54 Baldwin Street. <i>Bristol 1452</i>
BIRMINGHAM	King's Court, 115 Colmore Row. <i>Birmingham Central 1205</i>
DUBLIN	39 Lower Ormond Quay. <i>Dublin 44667</i>
GLASGOW	Castle Chambers, 55 West Regent Street, C.2. <i>Douglas 3934</i>
MANCHESTER	6 St. Ann's Passage. <i>Manchester Central 5824</i>

## OVERSEAS BRANCHES AND MANAGERS

AUSTRALIA	G. S. Inman, 117 Birrell Street, Waverley, Sydney, N.S.W.
CHINA	The Monotype Corporation, Ltd., 17 The Bund, Shanghai
INDIA	The Monotype Corporation, Ltd., 27/5 Waterloo Street, Calcutta; P.O. Box 305, Bombay; P.O. Box 336 Mount Road, Madras
NEW ZEALAND	G. J. Morrison, 210 Madras Street, Christchurch
SOUTH AFRICA	Monotype Machinery (S.A.) Ltd., 12 Long Street, Cape Town

## FOREIGN CONCESSIONNAIRES

### CONTINENTAL EUROPE

Continental Monotype Trading Company Ltd., Basle, their subsidiary Companies and Agents:

<i>Amsterdam</i>	Continental Monotype Trading Company Ltd., Keizersgracht 142
<i>Berlin</i>	Monotyp-Setzmaschinen-Vertriebsgesellschaft m.b.H., Kreuzberg Strasse 30, S.W.61
<i>Brussels</i>	3 Quai au Bois de Construction
<i>Paris</i>	Compagnie Française d'Importation "Monotype," 85 Rue Denfert- Rochereau
<i>Rome</i>	Silvio Massini, Via due Macelli 12
<i>Helsingfors</i>	Kirjateollisuusasioimisto Osakeyhtio, Vladimirsgatan 13 (Agents)
<i>Oslo</i>	Olaf Gulowsen, Akersgaten 49 (Agents)

We beg to remind our friends and the Trade generally that the name "Monotype" is our Registered Trade Mark and indicates (in this country) that the goods to which it is applied are of our manufacture or merchandise. Customers are requested to see that all keyboards, casters, accessories, paper, and other goods of the kind supplied by us bear the said Registered Trade Mark, which is a guarantee that the same are genuine.



PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
AND PUBLISHED BY  
THE MONOTYPE CORPORATION LIMITED  
FETTER LANE, LONDON, E.C.4



12 PT. SCALE

5

10

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

60

THE "MONOTYPE" SETS TYPE TO THE WIDTH OF SIXTY EMS PICA