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ANATOMY  
OF A  
TYPEFACE

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BOSTON

## CLOISTER OLD STYLE

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When printing became established on the Italian peninsula in about 1465, the first types to emerge were transitional between the black-letter (gothic) northern-European manuscript hands and those forms now called roman. It was owing to the humanist influence early in the fifteenth century that the scribes who were engaged in copying the ancient Greek and Roman texts turned to the letter styles that had emerged as early as the eighth century in the writing reforms instigated by Charlemagne (from which developed the writing style now known as Carolingian minuscule).

By the mid-fifteenth century the tradition had been set for the later printed editions of the classics to appear in this transitional form: the early printers, naturally enough, were guided by readers' familiarity with certain letter styles in the development of their types. It was thus logical for the Italian printers to turn to the humanist manuscripts as models, and to use these models to continue the manuscript tradition via typography.

It is rarely possible for modern observers to determine which manuscript models were used by the first fifteenth-century punchcutters; those printers who entered the craft after it had been established simply copied the type that had already proved successful. By contrast, the task of identifying more recent sources is much simplified, for types, rather than manuscript hands, serve as the inspiration for later revivals.

The creator of such a revival—the first step in the evolution of Cloister Old Style—was William Morris. Writing in 1895, a year before his death, he summed up his ideals as a printer in *A Note by William Morris on His Aims in Founding the Kelmscott Press*, in which he discusses the rationale behind his first choice of a type for his printing venture:

By instinct rather than by conscious thinking it over, I began by getting myself a font of Roman type. And here what I wanted was a letter pure in



What sprang from this collaboration was not, as Morris remarked, a 'servile' copy of Jenson, but one that suited the concept Morris had evolved for the individualized printing he planned to produce. The Golden type and that of Nicolas Jenson are alike only in generalized details; the Golden is noticeably heavier. So successful, however, was this use of the Jenson-inspired type in the magnificently printed Kelmscott editions that it stimulated other private-press printers to embark on similar efforts. More important, it aroused an interest on the part of type designers in general in reexamining fifteenth-century sources for models upon which to base new typefaces.

The commercial typefounders, for example, took note of the widespread appeal of the Golden type and began to produce, not versions of the original Jenson, but undeviating imitations of Morris's type. But whereas William Morris required only one size of the Golden type, the founders, to meet the demands of their printer customers, had to cut a complete range of sizes, and it is here that the eccentricities inherent in this type – the slanted serifs, for instance – became most noticeable. These copies, obtainable under a variety of names (Jenson, Kelmscott, Ancient Roman, and others), were nevertheless purchased in great quantity. The Golden design also influenced numerous similar styles cut for printers, mostly amateur, who wished to produce books in the Morris manner, but none of these types (Vale, Essex, Merrymount, Village, and so forth) had any lasting effect on the typefounders.

The next step in the process that eventually resulted in the cutting of Cloister Old Style came about with the establishment in 1900 of the Doves Press in London by T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, who was also animated by the Morrisonian ideal. The Doves type began, like the Kelmscott, with Jenson, and was cut by the same punchcutter, Edward Prince. It should be noted that a partner in this press was Emery Walker, who had earlier advised Morris on the selection of a type. But Cobden-Sanderson eschewed the strongly decorated Kelmscott pattern and turned instead to pure typography. This breakaway from the medievalism of Morris better suited the requirements of the nascent twentieth-century art of the book.

Still another development leading to the more modern aesthetic judgment of the types of Nicolas Jenson occurred about the same period. The American typographer Bruce Rogers – then designing books for the Riverside Press in Cambridge, Massachusetts – had examined in the Boston Public Library a copy of the great Jenson

fidem supplices confugimus. Nihil nr̄a interest vtrum  
sub illo legato sub illo praesidio locros ee sinatis anira  
to ha<sup>l</sup> et poenis ad supplicium dedatis. Non postulam<sup>?</sup>  
ut ex templo nobis de absente indicta ca credatis. Cora  
ipse audiat. Veniat ipse diluat si qcoq<sup>?</sup> sceleris quod  
homo in homines edere pot in nos praetermisit non  
recusamus qn et nos omnia eadem iterum si pati possu  
mus patiamur et ille omni diuino humanoq<sup>?</sup> liberetur  
scelere. Hec cum a legato dicta eent. quessissetq<sup>?</sup> ab  
us. Q. fabius detulissent ne eas querelas ad P. Scipio  
nem responderunt missos legatos ee s; eum belli ap  
paratu occupatum ee. in africanam aut iam traiecisse.  
aut intra paucos dies traiecturum. et legati gratia  
qta eet apud impatorem exptos ee cum inter eum et  
tribunos cognita ca tribunos in uincula coniecerit. le  
gatum aeque soncem aut magis ee in ea potate reliq  
rit. Iussis excedere ex templo legatis non plennius  
m. s; et Scipio principum oronib; lacerari. Ante oms  
Q. fabius natum eum ad corrumpendam disciplinam  
militarem arguere. Sic et in hispania plus ppe p sedi  
tionem militum q bello amissum. externo et regio mo  
re. et indulgere licentiae militum et seuire in eos. Sen  
tentiam dein aeque trucem orationi adiecit plenniu  
uinctum romam deportari placere. et ex uinculis cam

possem dicere. Porro cū duæ sint cōsuetudines quæ uirtuti subiciunt: alia quædam quid quodq; entiū sit inspicit: alia uero quid uocetur: atq; in hunc modū de rōali philosophiæ parte differunt. Enim uero moralē philosophiæ partē in subiectos diuidunt locos: uidelicet de appetitione: de bonis & malis: de perturbationibus: de uirtute: de fine: deq; prima extimatōne: & de actibus ac de officiis: de adhortationibus & hortationibus: in hunc autem modū subdistingūt Chrysippus archedemus Zeno tarfensis Apollodorus Diogenes Antipater & Possidonius. Nā cithieus Zeno & cleantes ut antiquiores simplicius ita tractarunt. At hi & rōnalē naturalemq; philosophiæ partē diuiserunt. Primā autē hanc aīantis appetitionē fuisse dicunt seipsum tuendi atq; seruandi: natura sibi ipsū ab initio ita cōciliāte: ut chrysippus ait in priore de finibus: primū propriū cuiq; aīanti dicēs sui ipsius fuisse cōmendationē huiusq; notionē. Neq; enī fas erat aīal ipsum uel ab se alienū fieri: uel oīo id fieri: uel non sibi maxie propriū fieri. Restat ut dicamus hanc ipsum sibi maxia concordia & caritate deūxisse. Ita enī & noxia propellit: & quæ ad sui constantiā sunt utilia suscipit. Quod autē dicunt quidā primā appetitionē animātibus ad uoluptatē fieri falsū profecto est. Accessionē enim dicunt si quid sit uoluptatē esse: cū ipsam per se natura inquisierit: & quæ cōmendatōi suæ sūt accomodata pcepit: quēadmodū exhilarescunt aīalia uirescuntq; arbores: Nihilq; aiunt differt natura in arboribus & aīalibus quādo de illis absq; motu uoluntatis ac seorsu disponit: & in nobis quādā eadē ratōe fiunt. Cū uero ex superfluo appetitio animantibus accesserit: qua uteutes pagant quæ sua sunt: in eis quidē naturali cōstātia appetitionē illā disponi. Cæterū cū rōalibus perfectiore præcepto data sit rō secundū eā uiuere. scilicet recte fieri his quæ secundū naturā sūt ea quippe artifex accidit moderatrixq; appetitōis. Quocirca

in her bely, and remayned vyrgyn after the chyldyng. And when he had so sayd, he was anone all hoolie parfrightly. And thenne saide peter to hym ¶ Take that palme of the honde of oure broder Johan, and leye it on the peple that be blynde, and who that wylle bileue shalle receyue his sight ageyne. And they that wylle not byleue shall neuer see. And thenne thapostles bare marye vnto the monument, and satte by it, lyke as our lord had commaunded, and at the thyrddē day Jhesu crist cam with a grete multytude of Angels and salewed them and saide pees be with yow. And they answerd, god, glory be to the whiche only maketh the grete myracles and merueyles. And oure lord sayd to thapostles ¶ What is now youre aduys that I ought now to doo to my moder, of honour and of grace? Syre, it semeth to vs thy seruantes that lyke as thou hast vanquysshid the deth & regnest world withoute ende, that thou reyse also the body of thy moder, & sette her on thy ryght side in perdurablyte. And he graunted it. And thenne Mychael the angel cam & presented the sowle of Marye to oure lord. And the saueour spacke and sayde ¶ Aryse vp, haste the my culuer or douue, tabernacle of glorye, vessel of lyf, Temple celestyal, and lyke as thou neuer feltest conceyuing by none atouchement, thou shalt not suffre in the sepulcre no corrupcion of body. And anon the sowle cam ageyne to the body of marye and yssued gloriously oute of the tombe, and thus was receyued in the heuenly chambre, and a grete companye of angels with her. And saynt Thomas was not there, and whan he cam he wolde not byleue this. And anone the gyrdell with whiche her body was gyrde cam to hym fro the ayer, whiche he receyued, and therby he vnderstode that she was assumpt in to heuen. ¶ And alle this here to fore is sayd & called Appocriphum. Whereof saynt Jerom sayth in a sermon to paula and Eustochium her doughter ¶ That book is said to be apocryfum, sauf that somme wordes whiche ben worthy of feyth & ben approued of seyntes as touchyng nyne thynges, that is to wete, that the comferte of thapostles was promysed and

book, Eusebius's *De Praeparatione Evangelica*, printed in 1470. Excited by the desire to re-create this beautiful design, Rogers then sought out other Jenson books. He reproduced their pages in what he later described as 'the search for what I fondly thought would be the ideally perfect type; not knowing then that it was something like the quest of the Holy Grail.'

In 1901 Rogers had progressed to the point of having the Riverside Press authorize the cutting of his designs, which was done by John Cumming, a punchcutter working in Worcester, Massachusetts. Origin-

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oxen. So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses, according to the king's commandment. And they killed the passover, & the priests sprinkled the blood from their hands, and the Levites flayed them. And they removed the burnt offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the Lord, as it is written in the book of Moses. And so did they with the oxen. And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the other holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, & divided them speedily among all the people. And afterward they made ready for themselves, & for the priests: because the priests the sons of Aaron were busied in offering of burnt offerings and the fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron. And the singers the sons of Asaph were in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the porters waited at every gate; they might not depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them. So all the service of the Lord was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the Lord, according to the commandment of king Josiah. And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. And there was no passover like to that, kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept. ¶ After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling

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The Doves type, in the English Bible of the Doves Press, 1903–05

nally intended for a notable edition of the *Essays* of Montaigne, and thus named Montaigne, the Rogers type was actually used for the first time in another book designed by Rogers, Sir Walter Raleigh's *Last Sea Fight of the Revenge*, published in 1902. Rogers, however, was not satisfied with the face and some years later improved on it in a new design named Centaur, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The activities of the numerous private presses of the period 1900–1910 aroused the interest of both commercial printers and typesetters – William Morris's concept of returning to the historic typefaces had begun to take effect. The earliest big venture in type

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**IN PRINCIPIO CREAVIT DEUS CÆLUM, ET terram. Terra autem erat inanis et vacua, et tenebræ erant super faciem abyssi; et Spiritus Dei ferebatur super aquas. Dixitque Deus: Fiat lux. Et facta est lux. Et vidit Deus lucem quod esset bona; et divisit lucem a tenebris. Appel- lavitque lucem Diem et tenebras Noctem; factumque est vespere et mane, dies unus. Dixit quoque Deus: Fiat fir- mamentum in medio aquarum, et dividat aquas ab aquis. Et fecit Deus firmamentum, divisitque aquas, quæ erant sub firmamento, ab his, quæ erant super firmamentum. Et factum est ita. Vocavitque Deus firmamentum, Cœ- lum; et factum est vespere et mane, dies secundus. Dixit vero Deus: Congregentur aquæ, quæ sub cælo sunt, in lo- cum unum, et appareat arida. Et factum est ita. Et voca- vit Deus aridam, Terram, congregationesque aquarum appellavit Maria. Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum. Et ait: Germinet terra herbam virentem, et facientem semen, et lignum pomiferum faciens fructum juxta genus suum, cujus semen in semetipso sit super terram. Et factum est ita. Et protulit terra herbam virentem, et facientem se- men juxta genus suum, lignumque faciens fructum, et ha-**

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Merrymount design of Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue

revivalism, the recutting of Bodoni by Morris Benton for the American Type Foundry Company, occurred in 1910, and it proved such a suc- cess that the foundry planned further such projects. One of these was Benton's Cloister Old Style, first produced in 1913. This face fulfilled the broad demands of the trade for a type employing the same historic sources as those of the esteemed private presses.

Morris Fuller Benton had become a type designer through the circumstance of having for a father Linn Boyd Benton, a typesetter and the inventor, no less, of the pantograph device, patented in 1885, which had mechanized the craft of punchcutting. It was this machine that freed typesetting from the laborious procedure of cutting by

'the world knoweth, and especially such things as have drawne-on  
'publike effects, and of such consequence, it is an inexcusable defect,  
'or as I may say unpardonable oversight.<sup>65</sup> To conclude, whosoever  
'desireth to have perfect information and knowledge of King Fran-  
'cis the first, and of the things hapned in his time, let him addresse  
'himselſe elsewhere, if he will give any credit unto me. The profit he  
'may reap here, is by the particular deduction of the battels and ex-  
'ploits of warre, wherein these Gentlemen were present; some privie  
'conferences, speeches or secret actions of some Princes that then  
'lived, and the practices managed, or negotiations directed by the  
'Lord of Langeay, in whom doubtlesse are verie many things well-  
'worthie to be knowne, and diverse discourſes not vulgare.'

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

## Of Crueltie.



HE thinks vertue is another manner of thing,  
and much more noble, than the inclina-  
tions unto goodnesse which in us are ingen-  
dered. Mindes well borne and directed by  
themselves follow one same path, and in  
their actions represent the same visage that  
the vertuous doe. But vertue importeth and  
soundeth somewhat, I wot not what, greater  
and more active, than by an happy com-  
plexion, gently and peaceably, to suffer it selfe to be led or drawne  
to follow reason. He that through a naturall facilitie and genuine  
mildnesse should neglect or contemne injuries received, should no  
doubt performe a rare action and worthy commendation; but he who,  
being toucht and stung to the quicke with any wrong or offence re-  
ceived, should arme himselfe with reason against this furiously-blind  
desire of revenge, and in the end, after a great conflict, yeeld himselfe  
master over it, should doubtlesse doe much more. The first should  
doe well, the other vertuously; the one action might be termed good-  
nesse, the other vertue. For it seemeth that the verie name of vertue  
presupposeth difficultie and inferreth resistance, and cannot well ex-  
ercise it selfe without an enemy. It is peradventure the reason why  
we call God good, mightie, liberall and just, but we terme him not

hand every letter in a font of type, a practice that had not changed since Johann Gutenberg invented it in 1440. Before Benton, the only other procedure used for the production of matrices was electrotyping, which was developed about 1840. Electrotyping, however, was employed primarily for the copying of existing typefaces rather than for original designs; the method in fact encouraged the pirating of type designs (a custom common in our own time when phototypesetting machines were being developed).

When the younger Benton graduated from Cornell in 1896 as a mechanical engineer, he went to work for the American Type Founders Company as assistant to his father. The senior Benton had been given the responsibility of organizing the type-production facilities of that recently formed combine, put together in 1892 – despite loud protests in the printing trade – by the merging of some two dozen separate typefoundries. Morris Benton's duties were related to the mechanical aspects of typefounding, particularly the adaptation of the American Point System of typographic measurement, which had been instigated in 1886. But as the chaos and pressures that resulted from the vast amalgamation subsided, the young engineer began to develop an interest in letter forms themselves. As early as 1898 he produced the first of what ultimately became a list of more than 180 types, making him the most prolific type designer who has ever lived. This first type was originally named Buddy, but when it was employed by Elbert Hubbard it was renamed Roycroft, after Hubbard's craft center and printing establishment in upstate New York.

Benton next became involved in the development of the various additions to the Century family of types, on which his father had collaborated with the great scholar-printer Theodore L. De Vinne.

By 1904 Benton was fully established in type design with the production of the Cheltenham family of typefaces, based on the original face drawn by the architect Bertram Goodhue, which became the most widely known of all American types. In 1909 Benton turned to his first important revival of a classic type, that of Bodoni. Then, attracted to the Venetian letter forms favored by the private presses, he came to an appreciation of the work of the fifteenth-century Italian printers.

Cloister Old Style became the hallmark design in the revival of the Venetian old-style types in the present century. The face followed the spirit of its Jenson original in the blunt, solidly constructed serifs, but it had fuller bracketing than is apparent in the earlier letter. In

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*Cloister Italic, available in fourteen sizes ranging from six up to seventy-two point, sounded a new note in italic design. As no italic types were made in the first century of printing which would harmonize with the roman type of Jenson, it was necessary in designing this series to follow the shapes of the earlier sixteenth century italics of Aldus of Venice and certain French italics of a third of a century later. The resulting design is a vigorous italic that harmonizes excellently with the Cloister Oldstyle and is an admirable series on its own account*

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Cloister Oldstyle Italic (AFT)

this respect Stanley Morison, the English typographic historian, has discussed the lack of brackets (often called fillets) in all Venetian types before 1495; he wonders whether the craftsmen lacked the proper tools with which to refine serifs. More recently another English typographic historian, Harry Carter, has suggested that the invention in the 1470s of the jeweler's eyeglass provided the means of more exact seeing and therefore cutting.

Another feature of the Venetian types captured in Cloister Old Style is the avoidance of strong contrast between thick and thin strokes. Some authorities believe this shows that the Italian punchcutters during the first thirty years of printing were attempting to reproduce exactly the pen-drawn humanistic roman, rather than striving to cut original type letters.

The most distinctive of Jenson's lowercase letters is *e*, with its angled crossbar, a style followed by practically every Italian designer of the period until the appearance of the types of Francesco Griffo, cut for the press of Aldus Manutius in 1495.

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- 67 And both I and my Sages grew aware  
of sunset, by my shadow vanisht thence,  
when we had made brief trial of the stair.
- 70 And ere within one dim circumference  
the wide horizon mingled sea and shore,  
and Night held sway with all her influence,
- 73 Each of us on a stair was bedded; for  
the mountain-law deprived us of the will  
and of the power of there ascending more.
- 76 Just as, while ruminating, goats grow still,  
however bold and nimble they had run  
over the heights before they browsed their fill,
- 79 Husht in the shade while blazes hot the sun,  
watcht by the herdsman leaning on his rod,  
who, leaning thus, attends them every one;
- 82 And as the shepherd, stretcht upon the sod,  
watches by night his quiet flock beside,  
that no wild beast may scatter it abroad:
- 85 Even so did we at such an hour abide,  
I like the goat, they shepherdlike, all three  
hemmed in by lofty rock on either side.
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Cloister Lightface, in the edition of Dante printed by John Henry Nash,  
San Francisco, 1929

The capitals of Cloister retain the full height of the Jenson font, a factor criticized by Morison as detracting from the legibility of the face. Both *M* and *N* have the slab serifs typical of the Venetian types; that is, the upper serifs center on the stems of the letter. In many of

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ABCDEFGHIJKLMN O P

QRSTUVWXYZ &

abcdefghijklmnopqrstu

vwxyz 1234567890

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Eusebius (Ludlow)

the types favored by the Italian printers this feature was also carried over to the *A*.

In his design of the italic for Cloister Old Style, Benton encountered the problem faced by all modern type designers who return to the Venetian letter forms: there is no model to follow. Italic type was not cut until 1500, and when it finally did appear, in the *Virgil* of Aldus printed in 1501, it was used as a type completely independent of roman. It was not until the 1540s in France that italic was cut in a form that was complementary to the roman, and a good deal later before the two styles became, as they are today, inseparable.

Thus, type designers have had to invent and design italics to go with any roman that appeared between 1470 and 1500. Benton was among the first to confront this difficulty, the early private-press printers having ignored it by employing roman alone. He elected to create a cursive form that he believed to be in the spirit of the roman. Other type designers, by contrast and as will be discussed later, have preferred an italic with a strictly historic relationship to the upright form. This has resulted in the italics called chancery, based on Renaissance calligraphic sources, in which the letters are narrow and spiky. Cloister italic, by comparison, is a pleasantly rounded and sloped letter, certainly retaining the feeling of the roman.

Although lacking the aesthetic impact of some of the later Venetian revivals, Cloister has proved to be a most successful cutting, and has found its way into printing offices the world over, either in its foundry

(ATF) version or in the adaptations produced for the various type-setting machines. Those cut for the slug-casting machines (Linotype and Intertype) are identical to the Benton version except for the inevitable lack of kerning – not obtainable in a slug-casting machine matrix – which is most noticeable with the lowercase *f*.

The Ludlow Typograph Company, manufacturer of a slug-casting device used for display typography, brought out a type drawn by Ernst Detterer in 1923 that is quite close in spirit to Cloister Old Style. This face was first called Nicolas Jenson, but later changed to Eusebius. (The name has historic analogy, for Pamphili Eusebius was the author of the book that Jenson so splendidly printed in 1470, thereby establishing the printer's reputation for the design of the roman type that has come to be the standard for all those that followed.)

The italic of Eusebius differs from that of Cloister in that it follows the chancery style. It was drawn by R. Hunter Middleton, who, after Morris Benton and Frederic W. Goudy, has been one of the most prolific American type designers.

Although most American printers were enthusiastic about Cloister when it first appeared, the redoubtable printer-historian Daniel Berkeley Updike treated it somewhat condescendingly in his great work *Printing Types* (1922): 'Cloister Old Style Roman was based on a study of Nicolas Jenson's long-suffering and as yet unrivalled font, and its italic is of an interesting early form. It is a practical type; not very inspired, perhaps, yet quiet and satisfactory because not attempting too much. . . .'

At present, Cloister Old Style as a book type has lost ground to some of the later Venetian old styles. But in commercial printing and for advertising display it continues to be popular, particularly in its boldface version encountered daily in the consumer periodicals.

For examples of its use in distinguished book making, the reader is urged to examine the work of the San Francisco printer John Henry Nash, who was very fond of the type and employed it frequently. The great book from his press, the four-volume *Dante* published in 1929, is completely hand-set in Cloister Light, one of the weights produced by the American Type Founders Company.