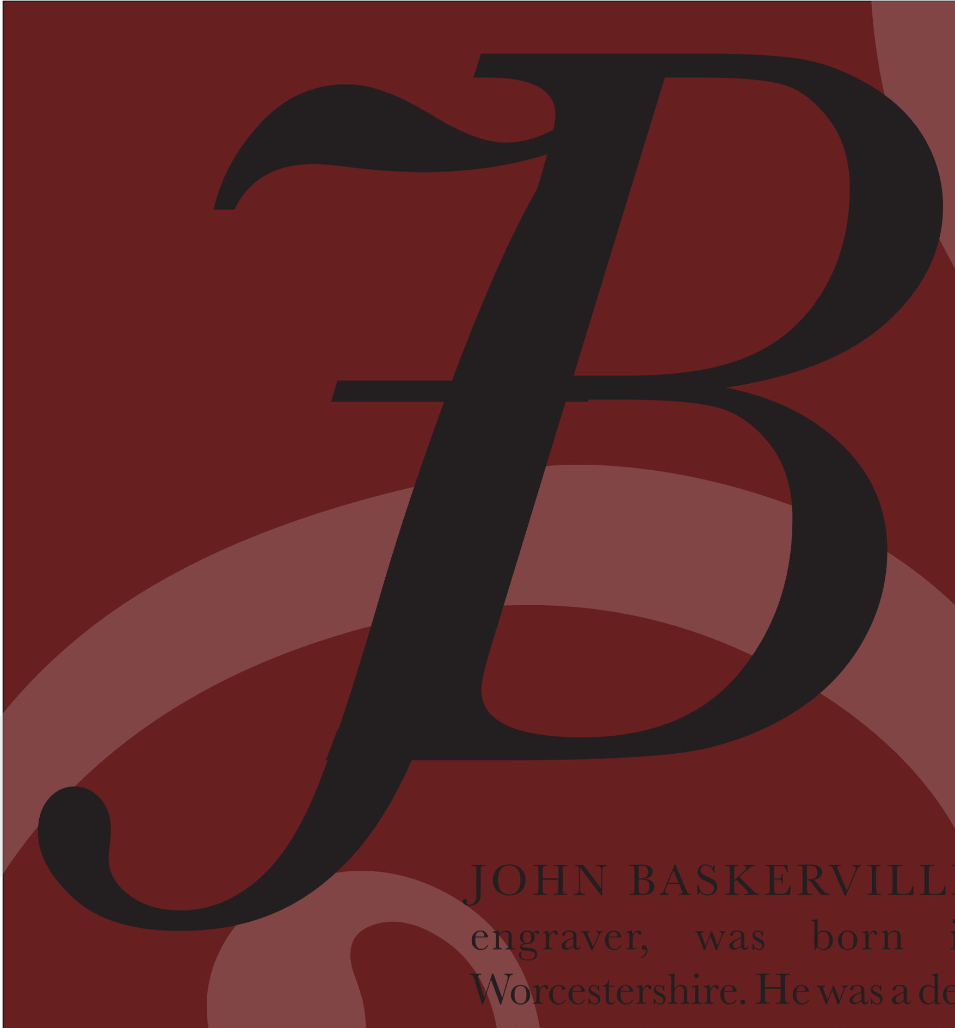


JOHN BASKERVILLE, an English engraver, was born in 1706 in Worcestershire. He was a designer of type, print, and stone carving. "At seventeen, he was engraving tombstones. By the time he was twenty, he was teaching, writing, and bookkeeping and running and engraving business as well".

In 1726, at the age of 20, he moved to Birmingham to teach writing and penmanship in Bull Ring while maintaining his work as an engraver. "By 1738, he had taught himself japanning – a process for covering decorated metals with varnish – which earned him an early fortune"."In 1749, Baskerville's thoughts turned to printing. As he wrote, 'Having been an early admirer of the beauty of Letter, I became insensibly desirous of contributing to the perfection of them'". He spent the next seven years working on a typeface and building a printing press. He even created a type of paper to perfect his printing. "To prevent his shiny ink from spreading beyond the actual imprint of the page, he crafted his own very smooth paper (now called a 'wove' finish; earlier, ribbed sheets are called 'laid'. He also pressed his sheets between heated copper plates after printing to hasten drying". This innovation allowed Baskerville to produce clear work with crispness and finer lettering. He created his own ink, which he used in his prints.

In 1757 he started to work for the University of Cambridge as a printer. "He published his first book, an edition of Virgil" . He also produced various other works such as Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, Book of Common Prayer, and the Bible. Ironically, as an atheist, the Bible is noted to be Baskerville's greatest achievement. He lost a lot of money while printing the Bible for University of Cambridge and had to ask for a government subsidy.

admirer

"Having been an early admirer of the beauty of Letter, I became insensibly desirous of contributing to the perfection of them."

BEAUTY

Lifelong *passion*

He was a man with a lifelong passion for beautiful lettering and books.

Throughout his career, Baskerville always had a desire for perfection and improvement. He created the typeface Baskerville to attempt to improve the well-known typeface of William Caslon. He produced his typeface for improved legibility and for large-scale prints. He made changes to the way in which metal type was made, enabling him to produce finer, more delicate lettering than any before him had achieved.

It contained varied stroke weights and characters set on a vertical axis. His typeface was criticized for being too thin and failed as a typeface. It was later revived in the 20th century. During his career, he created numerous typefaces such as: EF Baskerville, Baskerville (BT), Baskerville Caps, Baskerville Classico, Baskerville No. 2, ITC New Baskerville, and ITC New Baskerville (EF).

John Baskerville died in 1775 and was buried in Birmingham. His typeface Baskerville remains one of the most used typefaces in print today. He was a man with a lifelong passion for beautiful lettering and books. "Baskerville was a maverick and an adventurer who pursued any avenue, however revolutionary, which promised satisfaction, excitement and fortune".

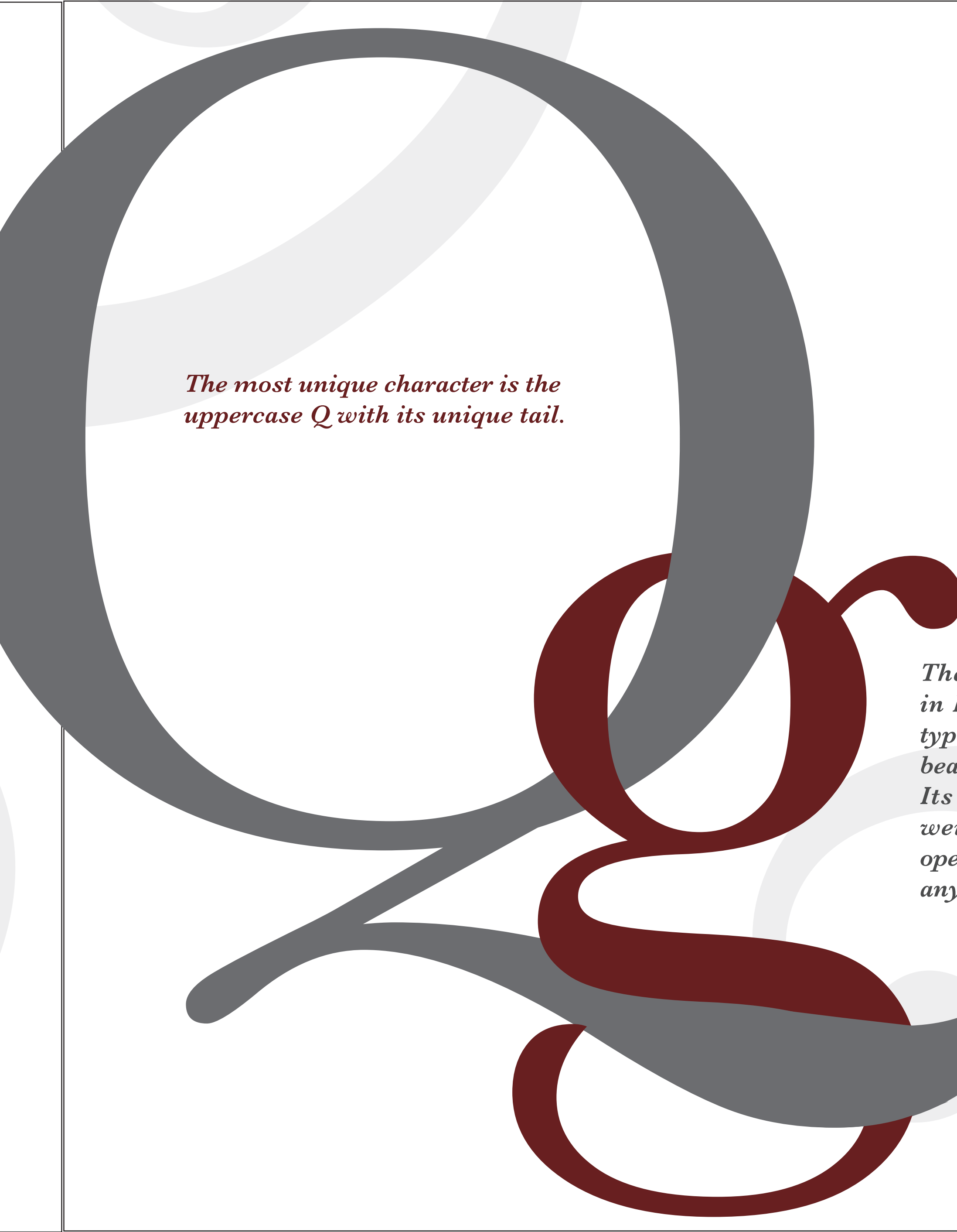
The typeface Baskerville is a transitional typeface commonly used in print. The typeface was a result of Baskerville's attempt in improving William Caslon's typeface and was influenced by his standards of perfection in his work. His typeface was designed for large-scale print to increase legibility. This when leaded correctly and space between words.

WITH THE CONTRAST *between stroke weights and* THE CURVED CIRCULAR *strokes, the typeface was* PERFECT FOR PRINT

John Baskerville's interest in simplicity and elegance is evident in the typeface Baskerville. The characters in the typeface vary between thick and thin strokes with sharp serifs. The other characters are set on a more vertical axis. The lowercase letters still maintained delicacy and contrast between stroke weights in each character.

The Baskerville typeface includes regular, italic, semibold, semibold italic, bold, and bold italic. The uppercase characters in the Baskerville regular all lay on a vertical axis, as do the lowercase characters. They lowercase characters have a regular x-height, which lies on the median. The numericcharactersin the typeface contain varied stroke weights like the letterforms and extend from the baseline to the cap height. The Italic differs greatly from the regular in the character styles. Still containing the contrast in stroke weights, the characters lay on a slanted axis. The serifs are altered in most of the characters and there are more curves in the character shapes.

The most unique character is the uppercase Q with its unique tail.



The lowercase "g" in Baskerville's typeface is also one of beauty and elegance. Its varying stroke weights, curves, and open tail are unlike any other typeface.

maverick

John Baskerville was a MAVERICK and an ADVENTURER who followed any avenue, however bizarre, which promised fame, fortune or infamy.

adventurer

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