

# Reckonly

a revival and  
extrapolation of  
Kennerley Old Style  
by

**Chris Willmore**

Type West 2024  
San Francisco

Instructors:  
Maria Doreuli  
Kel Traughton

# Discovering Kennerley

For Trimester 1 of Type West we were asked to revive a typeface based on a book that was published before 1930 (that is, published at a time which we could be confident that the book was printed using metal type). I looked through the bookshelves at Adobe Books, a charming shop in San Francisco with an impressive and somewhat idiosyncratic selection of old travel and art books. I chose a few that I thought might make a good project (namely, weren't set in some variety of Century or Caslon), but the one that called to me most strongly was a small book, "Sculpture of the Exposition Palaces and Courts" by Juliet James (fig. 1). The book contains several photographs of statues from the Panama-Pacific International Exposition held in San Francisco in 1915, with a short passage describing the work and the artist's intent on the facing page.

I determined using identifont.com that the book was set in Kennerley Old Style, a typeface designed in 1911 by American type designer Frederic Goudy for his friend, publisher Mitchell Kennerley, to use in the publication of H. G. Wells' short story collection "The Door in the Wall and Other Stories." Kennerley Old Style was designed in part in reaction to the ubiquity of Caslon, which Goudy regarded as having an undesirable unevenness of color due to the capital letters being much thicker than the lowercase. Kennerley Old Style would go on to be Goudy's first "hit" typeface and serve as a basis for Goudy Old Style, which is Goudy's best known typeface today (fig. 2). (I feel a certain kinship with Goudy knowing that he designed his first successful typeface when he was 46, having just turned 40

### THE JOY OF LIVING

Paul Manship, Sculptor

With perfect abandon come these maidens into the Court of the Universe, carrying their festoons of wild roses. They bring to the great festival joy and love of life—a telling addition to all that has been expressed in the court. They savor of old Greek days, these maidens of archaic hair and zigzag draperies. Paul Manship loves the classic which brings with it much of free expression, and he has adopted the archaic style that recalls the figures such as are seen on old Greek vases. No one is more joyous among the sculptors than this man. He has a rarely beautiful gift from the gods.



THE JOY OF LIVING  
Paul Manship, Sculptor

[40]

fig. 1: a scan from “Sculpture of the Exposition Palaces and Courts”

# Hamburgefontsiv

# Hamburgefontsiv

fig. 2: Kennerley Old Style (top) served as the basis for Goudy Old Style (bottom)

[3]

myself!) This face was fairly new at the time it was used in the “Sculptures” book in 1915.

I was drawn to the peculiar character of the typeface, with its generous x-height, tilted crossbar on the ‘e’, high crossbar on the ‘A’, prominent serifs and unconventional contrast on the ‘z’, offset dot on ‘i’ and ‘j’, and the odd way in which the ascenders on ‘k’, ‘l’, ‘d’, and ‘b’ flared slightly as they rose above the x-height (fig. 3). My theory about the offset dot is so that ‘f’ and ‘i’ don’t collide and the need for an ‘fi’ ligature is obviated, although I like the effect that it seems to pull the eye forward in words that contain those letters. As for the flare, I wasn’t sure if it was a printing artifact or an intended part of the letterform, and previous digitizations did not reflect that flare, but I decided to reproduce it in my revival and see what the effect looked like. The book also contained a number of typographic elements that are out of fashion today — a very short em dash, a tilted hyphen, and an odd wedge-shaped ornament for separating paragraphs. I decided to see how many of these idiosyncrasies I could get away with keeping without making the revival seem too dated.

# Digitization

I started by scanning about ten pages of text from the book, isolating individual letters using the “Export for Web” tool in Pixelmator Pro, and importing them into a new Robofont document, ensuring that they were all scaled by the same amount so that the proportions of the characters remained consistent with the scan. I then did a preliminary trace of the lowercase character in ‘adhesion’ to make sure I was on the right track in terms of weight and feel. I chose to use rounded corners in general for the serifs, as I wanted to emulate the soft, organic feel of the text as I found it in the book (as opposed to however sharp the original metal type might have been). I also chose to preserve

*'t' point leans  
forward slightly*

*'e' has tilted  
crossbar*

*'y' descender shorter  
than 'p' descender*

*'i' dot offset  
to right*

*ascenders  
flare slightly*

*flipped-up  
ear on 'g'*

*'z' has reverse contrast,  
distinctive serif on bottom*

types with gaze,

fig. 3: peculiarities of Kennerley Old Style as seen in the original scan

the slight cupping of the lower serifs on ‘n’ and propagate them to other letters. Tracing the ‘s’ was especially challenging — I spent a lot of time figuring out a distribution of weight from the middle curve of the ‘s’ up into the top and bottom that felt harmonious with the other characters. But eventually I got something that felt good. Somewhat unusually, I chose to use a proper serif on the top of the ‘s’ but not on the bottom. Whether ‘s’ has a serif on the bottom in the original text is arguable, and in my own previous designs (notably Gnawbone) I enjoyed that asymmetry.

The next step was to trace the rest of the letters, copying and pasting common elements from the ‘adenos’ letters like the serifs on ‘n’ and the counter of ‘d’ to ensure consistency within the alphabet. I found that my initial version of the flared top on ‘d’ looked entirely too globby next to the analogous top serif on ‘n’, so I made them a little more consistent. I also applied general best practices where I felt they were needed, like extending the bottom serif of the ‘r’ into the void under its hook. Spacing was fairly straightforward using the ‘nnxnn ooxoo’ method described in class; I spaced the ‘n’ so that the vertical strokes in ‘nnn’ had consistent spacing (i.e. the space between the strokes of the ‘n’ was the same as the space between consecutive ‘n’s), then spaced the ‘o’ so it looked reasonable in that context, then copied the spacing to all other letters appropriately.

One surprise that came up was that ‘b’, despite having a serif on the left side like ‘n’, seemed to demand tighter spacing because that serif was up at the ascender height rather than the x-height and therefore pairs like ‘nb’ seemed to have a lot more whitespace than ‘nn’ if ‘b’ was given the same left side bearing as ‘n’. ‘q’ was similarly affected on the right side.

I moved on to the capital letters, but I found that I had not yet scanned a complete inventory of them — I was missing a lot of the rarer capital letters like ‘Z’, ‘K’, ‘W’. Fortunately the book contained at least one example of all of the capital letters, and after a few more scans I was ready to digitize all of them. Like in the lowercase letters, I traced ‘H’ and ‘O’ and used those letters as the basis for the rest of the letters. For example, when digitizing the ‘D’ I started with one of the stems of ‘H’, copied

# SQUAZ

thicken 'U' thin  
vertical

thin bottom  
stroke of 'Z'

# SQUAZ

fix backwards  
lean of 'S'

lower 'A' crossbar

make 'Q' stroke  
less blobby

# diquunb

refine 'd', 'b' flag  
to match 'n'

rein in 'i'  
dot a bit

thicken 'q', 'd',  
'b' top curve

# diquunb

extend serif on 'r', 'p',  
'q' to fill space

reduce side bearing on  
flat side of 'q', 'b'

fig. 4: some of the changes from first trace (top) to final draft  
(bottom)

the right half of ‘O’ on top of it, and nudged the result around so it matched the scan, more or less.

All that remained were figures and punctuation. Sadly, there weren’t too many good examples of either in the book. The only figures were old-style numerals used for page numbers, and probably not in the same size as the body text; the I-like ‘i’ and monolinear ‘o’ felt fairly antiquated, and the ‘s’ was particularly wild-looking. In digitizing them I attempted to harmonize the top curves of ‘2’ and ‘3’. The only punctuation marks present were period, comma, quote marks, em dash, hyphen, square brackets, and a solitary exclamation point. I attempted to fill in the blanks and hypothesize what the question mark, ampersand, parentheses, etc. were supposed to look like. (Looking at a more comprehensive sample of Kennerley Old Style that I found elsewhere much later, I found that the original ampersand looks nothing like my reconstruction. Oh well!)

At this point I had a fairly complete character set, and my changes became more editorial. For instance, the length of the em dash in the book doesn’t really read as an em dash today; I had to lengthen it quite a bit. The crossbar on the ‘A’ feels very high — even though it matched the height of the crossbar on the ‘H’, it didn’t feel like the space above and below the ‘A’ crossbar were balanced, so I moved it down a bit. I also tempered the forward offset of the dots on ‘i’ and ‘j’ slightly. In print, the bottom stroke of the ‘Z’ is noticeably heavier than the top stroke, but on the computer it felt unbalanced, so I shaved some weight off. On the other side, the top curve of ‘q’ felt very thin so I fattened it up a bit at the joint. Finally, there were several rounded terminals that didn’t quite feel like they came from the same process — the legs on ‘R’ and ‘K’ and the tail on the ‘Q’ all had different stroke widths at the end of the stroke, so I evened those out. The face was starting to feel harmonious and I felt good looking at large bodies of text set in it.

Maria suggested, during one of our proofing sessions, that I look into designing a black version of the typeface. I was eager for any excuse to make this project into a variable font, so I converted the project from Robofont to Glyphs and added another master (fig. 5). I drew modified versions of the ‘adhesion’

Hamburge  
fontsivz!23!

Hamburge  
fontsivz!23!

Hamburge  
fontsivz!23!

Hamburge  
fontsivz!23!

Hamburge  
fontsivz!23!

regular

bold

black

bold lo-con

black lo-con

fig. 5: black and black low-contrast variants of Reckonly, along with bold and bold low-contrast interpolations

letters by fattening the thick strokes by about 250%, leaving the thin strokes alone, and shortening the serifs so they didn't collide, then expanded the result to the rest of the alphabet. This black version emphasized the unusual structure of 'z', which became its most defining glyph. I then exported a bold version which was the font interpolation halfway from Regular to Black.

Unfortunately, I found that the bold export, while a good display face, seemed a bit too high-contrast for text. So I created another master, calling it "Black Lo-Con," and made the thins a bit thicker across the board so it had lower contrast. The Bold Lo-Con export (produced by interpolating half way from Regular to Black Lo-Con) ended up looking much better in a text context.

To finish out the project, I filled out the Regular weight with the desired inventory of European Latin characters, and created Black and Black Lo-Con versions of most of the characters (but not all sadly). There are still some lumps in the design but I'm happy with where it ended up. The titles in this book are set in Reckonly Black 36, with the body text set in Reckonly Regular 10.

As for the name, I held off on deciding on one until very near the end of the project. During development, the project was called "Fluff," one of a series of throwaway names I gave my early Robofont files while I was trying to figure out how to properly import my scans for tracing. I finally settled on "Reckonly" as a phonetic metathesis of "Kennerley," inspired by Kel Troughton's project "Keladonia" (which was his revival of W. A. Dwiggins' Caledonia).

# Prior Revivals

Kennerley Old Style has been digitized at least five times before. I consciously decided not to refer to those other digitizations when working on my own, because I wanted to see how their interpretations of the source material differed from my own, and how strong their convictions were in terms of

“Sculptures of the Exhibition Palaces and Courts” scan

**typically American,**

Reckonly

**typically American,**

LTC Kennerley (Paul D. Hunt)

**typically American,**

TC Kingsley (Les Usherwood, Steve Jackaman)

**typically American,**

Goudy Bookletter 1911 (Barry Schwartz)

**typically American,**

fig. 6: a comparison of the original scan and Reckonly with three previous revivals of Kennerley Old Style

preserving the idiosyncrasies of the original type. Now that the design of Reckonly is fairly finalized, I compare it here (fig. 6) to a few existing digitizations of the font: LTC Kennerley, digitized by Paul D. Hunt for P22 Foundry; TC Kingsley, designed by Les Usherwood and Steve Jackaman in 1999; and Goudy Bookletter 1911, a revival by Barry Schwartz published by the League of Movable Type in 2011. The revivals all make different choices about what aspects of the original font to change to better conform to modern sensibilities. Goudy Bookletter 1911 transforms the ascender serifs to be vertically symmetrical and pennant-like, the ‘y’ descender is lowered to match that of the ‘p’, and the point of the ‘t’ is straightened up. TC Kingsley brings the dot of the ‘i’ back to be centered over the stroke. LTC Kennerley seems to be the most faithful of the three, perhaps at the expense of readability: its horizontal serifs seem very thin compared to the rest of the font. All three revivals seem to have an angle to the serif on the ‘p’ that I missed in my design and wish I had picked up on; it gives the glyph a rakish character. All of the revivals also chose to lower the cross-bar on the ‘A’; I tried hard to preserve the original crossbar height in Reckonly but I couldn’t get over how old-timey it ended up looking (and my instructors agreed). I’m just glad to know my struggle was shared by other designers.

Overall, I’m satisfied with Reckonly as a revival — I feel that the resulting text has an even color while still maintaining many of the quirks that drew me to it in the first place. Putting it side by side with the original scan (fig. 7), I struggle to immediately recognize which one is the original, which I consider a mark of success.

I’ve included a couple samples of Reckonly in use, as well as inventories of the characters in all fonts. The Black and Black Lo-Con masters are missing a few of the extended characters because I ran out of time.

## THE JOY OF LIVING

Paul Manship, Sculptor

With perfect abandon come these maidens into the Court of the Universe, carrying their festoons of wild roses. They bring to the great festival joy and love of life—a telling addition to all that has been expressed in the court. They savor the old Greek days, these maidens of archaic hair and zigzag draperies. Paul Manship loves the classic which brings with it much of free expression, and he has adopted the archaic style that recalls the figures such as are seen on old Greek vases. No one is more joyous among the sculptures than this man. He has a rarely beautiful gift from the gods.

## THE JOY OF LIVING

Paul Manship, Sculptor

With perfect abandon come these maidens into the Court of the Universe, carrying their festoons of wild roses. They bring to the great festival joy and love of life—a telling addition to all that has been expressed in the court. They savor the old Greek days, these maidens of archaic hair and zigzag draperies. Paul Manship loves the classic which brings with it much of free expression, and he has adopted the archaic style that recalls the figures such as are seen on old Greek vases. No one is more joyous among the sculptures than this man. He has a rarely beautiful gift from the gods.

A comparison of the scene from fig. 1 (left) with the same text set in Reckonly (right).

# USMNT advances to World Cup knockout stage with hard-fought victory over Iran

By Matias Grez, CNN

Nov. 30, 2022

[CNN] The US Men's National Team (USMNT) was made to work hard for its place in the World Cup knockout stage, earning a tough 1-0 win over Iran in a nerve-racking Group B decider at Qatar 2022.

Christian Pulisic's first-half goal was all that separated the two sides as the USMNT reached the round of 16 for the first time since 2014.

The pressure was certainly on for Gregg Berhalter's side in Qatar after the national team's failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, but the US got the job done with three gritty group performances.

It certainly wasn't pretty at times, in particular in the closing stages against Iran, but progressing through the group stage was the minimum expectation for this exciting young team.

There will be some concerns going into the knockout stages, though, after Pulisic suffered an abdominal injury while scoring the winner.

The USMNT will be hoping its star man, dubbed 'Captain America' by some, is fit for the round of 16 tie against the Netherlands on Saturday

following the news that Pulisic had been sent to hospital for a scan.

## Winner takes all

This was the only the third meeting ever between the two nations and their first World Cup encounter since France 1998 — a politically charged match that saw Iran emerge as a shock 2-1 winner.

That was the first time that Iran and the US, sometimes described officially in Iran as the 'Great Satan,' had met on the football pitch and the biggest sporting occasion between the countries since the 1979 revolution.

The build-up to this game in Qatar has been similarly tense, with Iran even calling for the USMNT to be expelled from the World Cup after the US Soccer Federation posted an Iranian flag without the emblem of the Islamic Republic on its social media platforms to show support for protesters in Iran.

USMNT manager Berhalter and captain Tyler Adams also faced some tough questions from Iranian journalists in a fiery press conference, fending off accusations of hypocrisy and disrespect.

Text from [cnn.com](http://cnn.com). Headline is Reckonly Black 24; body is Reckonly Regular 8; subtitles are Reckonly Bold Lo-Con 8 and 12

**toca** /'tOka/ [f] burrow

**toca|discos** /toka'dZiskus/ [m invar] record player;  
~fitas m invar tape player

**tocaia** /to'kaja/ [f] ambush

**tocante** /to'kātSi/ [a] (enternecedor) moving

**tocar** /to'kar/ [vt] touch; play <piano, música, disco  
etc>; ring <cAMPAINHA> • [vi] touch; <pianista,  
música, disco etc> play; <cAMPAINHA, telefone, sino>  
ring; ~**se** [vpr] touch; (mancar-se) take the hint; ~  
**a** (dizer respeito) concern; ~ **em** touch; touch on  
<assunto>

**tocha** /'tOSa/ [f] torch

**toco** /'toku/ [m] (de árvore) stump; (de cigarro) butt  
**toda** /'toda/ [f] **a** ~ at full speed

**todavia** /toda'via/ [conj] however

**todo** /'todu/ [a] all; (cada) every; [pl] all; ~ **o**  
**dinheiro** all the money; ~ **dia**, ~**s os dias** every day;  
~**s os alunos** all the pupils; **o dia** ~ all day; **em** ~  
**lugar** everywhere; ~ **mundo**, ~**s** everyone; ~**s nós**  
all of us; **ao** ~ in all; ~**poderoso** [a] almighty

**tofe** /'tOfi/ [m] toffee

**toga** /'tOga/ [f] gown; (de romano) toga

**toicinho** /toj'siJu/ [m] bacon

**toldo** /'towdu/ [m] awning

Text from “The Oxford Portuguese Dictionary”, Berkeley  
Reference, 1996. Keywords are Reckonly Bold Lo-Con 12; all  
other text is Reckonly Regular 12

# Reckonly Regular 20

Reckonly Bold 20

A B C D E F G H I J K L  
M N O P Q R S T U V W  
X Y Z Á À Â Ã Ä Å Ä Æ  
Ć Č Ç Đ É È Ê Ë Ë Ë Í Ì Ï  
Ï Ł Ł Ñ Ñ Ñ Ó Õ Õ Õ  
Ö Ø œ Ñ Ñ Ñ Ñ Ó Õ Õ Õ  
Ü Ü Ü Ý ÿ Ž Ž Ž  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o  
p q r s t u v w x y z á à â  
ã ä å å æ œ ç ç ð é è ê ë  
ë ï í ì î ï ñ l í ñ ñ ñ õ õ  
õ ö ø œ ñ ñ ñ ñ õ õ õ  
ü ü ý ÿ ź Ž Ž  
., : ; ? ! ¿ ¡ “ ” „ „ , ( )  
[ ] / \ - - - . .  
o i 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 \$ '

Reckonly Black 20

A B C D E F G H I J K L  
M N O P Q R S T U V  
W X Y Z Á Â Ä Å Ä Å Ä  
Æ Ć Č Ç Ð É È Ê Ë Ë Ë Í  
Ì Î Ï Í Í Í Í Í Í Í Í Í  
Ó Ö Ø Ø Ø Ø Ø Ø Ø Ø Ø  
Ô Ô Ô Ô Ø Ø Ø Ø Ø Ø Ø  
Ü Ù Ú Û Ü Ü Ý Ý Í Í Í  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n  
o p q r s t u v w x y z á à  
â â ä å å æ æ ç ç ð ð é è ê  
ë ë ë ë ë ë ë ë ë ë  
ò ô ô ö ø ø ø ø ø ø ø  
ù ù û ü ü ü ý ü ü ü  
., : ; ? ! ; ; “ ” „ „ , ( )  
[ ] / \ - - - \_ . •  
○ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 \$

Reckonly Bold Lo-Con 20

A B C D E F G H I J K L  
M N O P Q R S T U V W  
X Y Z Á À Â Ã Ä Å Ä Æ  
Ć Č Ç Đ É È Ê Ë Ë Ë Í Ì Ï  
Ï Ł Ł Ñ Ñ Ñ Ó Õ Õ Õ  
Ö Ø œ Ó Ŕ Ŕ Ŕ Ŕ Ŕ Ŕ Ŕ  
Û Ü Û Ý Ý Ž Ž Ž  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o  
p q r s t u v w x y z á à â  
ã ä å å æ œ ç ç ð é è ê ë  
ë ï ì ì ì ï ï l l ñ ñ ñ ñ õ õ  
õ ö ø œ ð ð ř ř ř ř ř ř ř ř ř  
û ü û ý ý ź ź ź  
. , : ; ? ! ¿ ¡ “ ” „ „ , ( )  
[ ] / \ - - - \_ . .  
o i 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 \$

Reckonly Black Lo-Con 20

A B C D E F G H I J K L  
M N O P Q R S T U V W  
X Y Z Á À Â Ã Ä Å Ä A Æ  
Ć Č Ç Đ É È Ê Ë Ë E Í Ì Ï  
Ï Í Ł L Ņ N Ñ Ó Õ Ò Ô  
Õ Ö Ø œ Ú Ú Ú Ú Ý Ý Ú Ú  
Ù Ú Ú Ü Ú Ú Ý Ý Ú Ú  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n  
o p q r s t u v w x y z á à  
â ã ä å å æ æ c ç d' é è ê  
ë e i í ì î ï l' l ñ ñ õ  
ò ô õ ö ø œ Ú Ú Ú Ú Ý Ý  
Ù Ú Ú Ü Ú Ú Ý Ý Ú Ú  
., : ; ? ! ; ; “ ” „ „ , ( )  
[ ] / \ - - \_ . .  
° 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 \$