ELSTOB

A Variable Font for Medievalists (and others), by Thornbec Stæfwyrhta

ABCDEFGHIJK ABCDEFGHIJK ABCDEFGHIJK ABCDEFGHIJK ABCDEFGHIJKLMN

18pt @ 26 & 24

Quousque tandem abutere, Catilina, pati-Quousque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra?

18pt Medium @ 20

Quousque tandem abutere, Catilina, p

Regular (12pt)

Beat⁹ uir q nō abiit in 9silio īpio² & in uia peccato² nō stetit, & in cathedra pestilentiae nō sedit, sed in lege dñi uoluntas ei Beat⁹ uir q nō abiit in 9silio īpio² © in uia peccato² nō stetit, © in cathedra pestilentiae nō sedit, sed in lege dñi uoluntas ei⁹ © in

10pt

Her Cynewulf benam Sigebryht his rices 7 Westseaxna wiotan for unryhtum dędum buton Hamtunscire, 7 he hæfde þa oþ he ofslog þone aldor Her Cynewulf benam Sigebryht his rices 7 Westseaxna wiotan for unryhtum dędum buton Hamtunscire, 7 he hæfde þa oþ he ofslog þone aldormon þe

Insular 8pt

Hep Cýnepulr benam Sizebnýht hir picer j Peftreaxna piotan rop unpýhtum betum buton Hamtunrcipe, j he hærbe þa oþ he ogrlog þone albonmon þe him lengeft punobe Hep Cýnepulr benam Sizebnýht hir picer j Peftreaxna piotan rop unpýhtum betum buton Hamtunrcipe, j he hærbe þa oþ he ogrlog þone albonmon þe him lengeft punobe j hiene þ

6p1

Da se Wisdom þa þis leoð asungen hæfde, þa ongan he eft spellian ŋ þus cwæð: "For ðæm nis nan tweo þ þes andwearda wela myrð ŋ let þa men þe bioð atehte to þam soðum gesæfðum; ŋ he nænne ne mæg gebringan þær he Da se Wisdom þa þis leoð asungen hæfde, þa ongan he eft spellian ŋ hus cwæð: "For ðæm nis nan tweo þ þes andwearda wela myrð ŋ let þa men þe bioð atehte to þam soðum gesæfðum; ŋ be nænne ne mæg gebringan þær he bim gehet, þ is æt þam bebsta

14pt Semibold Norse

Gylfi konungr réð þar londum er nú heitir Svíþjóð. Frá honum er þat sagt at hann gaf einni far Gylfi konungr réð þar londum er nú heitir Svíþjóð. Frá honum er þat sagt at hann gaf einni far

Regular (12pt) Runic

PIHL PIEMD FREP ELPMRXMIEMRIX PERE XFURIL
XRERI EER HM EL XRMDT
XIUPEM HREIFLET
PIHL PIEMD FHEP ELPMRXMIEMRIX PERE XFURIL
XRERI EER HM EL XRMDT
XIUPEM HREIFLET

10pt Bold Runic

REMPETON FIN RMOMPETON TPXXMIXIBREDERFWXNNENIE PHOTIP II REMEKENTRI: EDITE DII REMPETON FIN RMOMPETON TPXXMIXIBREDER FWXNNENIE PHOTIP II REMEKENTRI: EDITE DI

8pt Light Runic

REMPETING FAN RMINDEFING TEXMS XI-BREFER FUXNNE HIE PRITUE IS REMERESTRI: Regular (12pt) Light

Eue þi moder leop efter hire ehnen, from þe ehe to þe eappel, from þe eappel i Parais dun to þer eorðe, from þe eorðe to Eue þi moder leop efter hire ehnen, from þe ehe to þe eappel, from þe eappel i Parais dun to þer eorðe, from þe eorðe to helle. Þer

ExtraLight @ 10

Per ha lei i prisun fowr busent 3er ant mare, heo ant hire were ba, ant demde al hire ofsprung to leapen al efter hire to deað wiðuten ende. Biginnunge Per ha lei i prisun fowr busent 3er ant mare, heo ant hire were ba, ant demde al hire ofsprung to leapen al efter hire to deað wiðuten ende. Biginnunge ant rote

Medium IPA @ 10

a laŋ tajm a'go, wen aj waz dʒast 'staxtıŋ awt, aj hæd ŏa gud 'fɔxtʃən ta mit ŏa guet 'wıla 'kæŏaı. wıŏ al ŏi a'dæsəti əv juθ, aj æskt haı wat ad'vajs ʃi wud gıv ŏa 'wudˌbi 'ɪajtəɪ ənd ʃi ɪa'plajd: maj ad'vajs ta ŏa 'wud a laŋ tajm a'go, wen aj waz dʒast 'staxtıŋ awt, aj hæd ŏa gud 'fɔxtʃən ta mit ŏa guet 'wıla 'kæŏaı. wıŏ al ŏi a'dæsəti əv juθ, aj æskt haı wat ad'vajs ʃi wud gɪv ŏa 'wudˌbi 'ɹajtəɪ ənd ʃi ɹa'plajd: maj ad'vajs ta ŏa 'wud

What is a variable font?

A variable font is one that can do the work of a very large number of conventional fonts by varying the characters' shapes in ways designed by the font's creator. These variations are controlled by one or more axes, the most common of which is weight. Most traditional font families have two weights—regular and bold—but in a variable font the weight can be varied continuously from lightest to heaviest.

Elstob has three axes in both the roman and italic faces: weight, optical size, and grade.

The *weight* axis runs from 200 (ExtraLight) to 800 (ExtraBold), with 400 (Regular) as the default.

The *optical size* axis varies several aspects of the characters' shapes (especially x-height and contrast) for the best look at particular sizes. The scale for this axis (6–18) corresponds to point sizes (though you *can* use any optical size at any point size). Where instances (axis presets which work like static fonts) are named with point sizes, these are recommended for use at those sizes.

Grade is like weight, but with one crucial difference: it varies the weight of characters without changing their width. This is useful in web pages, for it allows you to dynamically change the weight of text (for example, on mouseover) without forcing the text to reflow.

Open Type features

OpenType is a font format that enables many advanced typographical features. For example, the ligatures in words like "office" and "afflict" are enabled by OpenType features, and so are discretionary ligatures like those in "sect" and "store," TRUE SMALL CAPS (not the scaled capitals produced by some applications) and old-style figures (1234 as opposed to 1234).

Elstob has these common Open-Type features and many more: English b and o, inrulan leccen-rhaper, automated use of long s with correct English and French rules (also a number of ligatures for potentially awkward combinations in words like affift and flash), automated r rotunda with contextual rules (producing, e.g., "o2der" and "b2other" but not "earn" or "first"), and automated transliteration of roman characters into runes (your choice of English futhorc, Elder futhark, or Younger futhark—long branch or short twig).

Contextual alternates are used to prevent collisions in words like sīð (compare the ð in suð) and for aesthetic purposes: compare, for example, the Q in Quest with the one in LGBTQ, and the p in *prevent* with the one in *belp*.

In the italic face, Elstob has several swash capitals (e.g. $\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{F}, \mathcal{P}$) as well as swash z and k.

Medieval features

If all you needed were the letters commonly used in medieval texts, many general-purpose fonts would do the trick. For example, Times New Roman has a perfectly good þ and ð for Old English, and a 3 for Middle English. But while the shapes of þ and ð in Times are correct for modern Icelandic, þ and ð are preferable for Old and Middle English.

The Unicode standard provides a number of medieval characters. Elstob contains a generous selection of the ones most generally useful to medievalists, and these have been handled with more than the usual care.

Consider, for example, the common Latin abbreviation for -us. Unicode provides two characters for this abbreviation: one that takes up space in a line of text, like a letter, and another that works like a diacritic, being attached to another character. Most diacritics are centered on the letters they modify (e.g. ü), but in manuscripts the -us abbreviation, when above a letter, is usually offset to the right. Elstob follows this common manuscript usage, e.g. salt, mun. Where a location above the base character would look awkward, the abbreviation is still raised, but placed to the right, e.g. Å, l'. Diacritics can be stacked in Elstob, and then they are usually

centered on top of one another. But in Elstob (as in most manuscripts), another diacritic instead pushes the -us sign to the right (e.g. q).

The spacing -us sign can look awkward in certain combinations, e.g. following A and f (A⁹, f⁹). These and many other combinations are kerned (their spacing adjusted) in Elstob so that they always look good: A⁹, f⁹.

A sampling of other medieval characters in Elstob: dl3, l\u00f2g, a/ltri, 9solatio, pfcm, pfcm, d, d. All of these, of course, work just as well in italic as in roman.

About this typeface

It is named for Elizabeth Elstob (1683–1756), a celebrated early scholar of Old English language and literature, closely connected with the Oxford "Saxonists" of that time. The font is based, however, not on Elstob's own publications, but on a typeface then employed by the Oxford University Press.

This was one of a number of type-faces commissioned by Bishop John Fell (1625–86) for use by the press and cut by the Dutch designer Peter de Walpergen (1646–1703). The model for Elstob is de Walpergen's Double Pica. However, Elstob is not a reproduction or a revival of this typeface, which it differs from in many respects—especially its vastly expanded repertory of characters.

0.000.0