Cen taur

bru ce ro gers

Regular

Bold Italic

Italic

Bold

LETTERS

more than mere units in a word

An article by Adam Bockler

United States typographer Gary Munch once said about Centaur: "For all-time most beautiful face, I nominate Bruce Rogers' Centaur. It's not a general purpose face at all, like the usual Times or Helvetica; but Centaur lives nobly on a page and yet invites its readers to honor both it and its message with their own intelligence and understanding." But if it wasn't for Centaur, Rogers might not be known as a type designer and just as a book designer.

EARLY LIFE

Bruce Rogers was born in Indiana in 1870. As a child, Rogers played with wooden alphabet blocks. "I fear I didn't do much with them except to build houses and forts," he wrote later, "though I may possibly have learned the alphabet at the same time." He received a copy of John Ruskin's Elements of Drawing from a cousin when he was twelve. It was at that time Rogers "became aware of letters as something more than mere units in a word." After high school, Rogers studied art at Purdue University, even helping produce their 1889 yearbook.

FIRST ATTEMPT

Rogers' first attempt at what would eventually become Centaur started twelve years before its commercial release. After Purdue, Rogers worked for the quarterly Modern Art magazine out of Indianapolis. In 1895, he moved with the company to Boston.
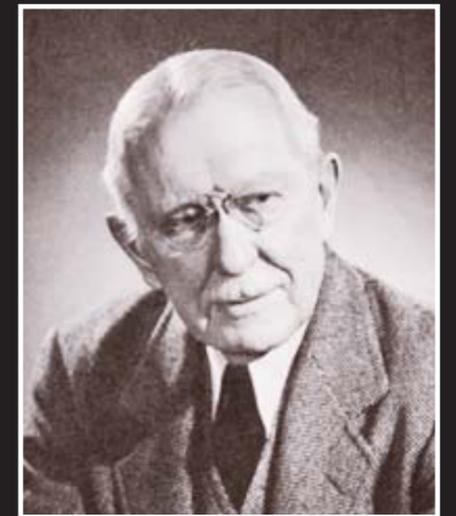
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

$1,026.70
+$463.58
+$642.93

Bruce Rogers, *mnbookarts.org*

$2133.21

Not long after his move out east, Rogers went to work for Rogers went to work for Houghton Mifflin and Co. It was there he designed his first font, based off Nicholas Jenson's 1470 Eusebius. Rogers was not entirely satisfied with his product.

COMMERCIAL RELEASE

Fast-forward over a decade later, and Rogers was in New York working as a freelance designer, again modeling work off Jenson's design. This time, he used enlarged copies of the font first appeared in a translation of De Guerin's Le Centaure. In true typographic tradition, the font was named after the first published work in which it appeared. Centaur's capitals were used exclusively for the New York Metropolitan Museum Press for several years. In 1928 London, he spent more than a year on a commercial release of Centaur. The font's most famous use was when a special 22-point size was cast to appear in a 1,238-page Oxford Lecturn Bible.

Centaur 6pt
Centaur 8pt
Centaur 9pt
Centaur 10pt
Centaur 11pt
Centaur 12pt
Centaur 14pt
Centaur 18pt
Centaur 24pt
Centaur 30pt
Centaur 36pt
Centaur 48pt
Centaur 60pt
Centaur 72pt

CENTAUR'S UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

J - tail points down; falls below baseline

9 - ball does not close

e - diagonal bar; serifs

M - upper serifs face up and point out

() - parens have an unmodulated stroke

SPECIAL CHARACTERS

Character	Output
Bullet	•
Copyright	©
Paragraph	¶
Registered Trademark	®
Section	§
Trademark	™
Ellipsis	…
Em-dash	—
En-dash	–
Double Left Quotes	"
Double Right Quotes	"
Single Left Quote	'
Double Left Quote	'
Single Straight Quote	'
Double Straight Quote	"

Adam Bockler is a sophomore multimedia and journalism student at Bradley University. He enjoys web design, martial arts, and heavy metal. Feel free to check out his portfolio at http://www.adambockler.com.

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