

PlayPen Sans comments

GL 29 Sep 24

Overall comment

The letteforms are shaped according to standard / generalised writing practices, and typeset convincingly. So, all comments below are refinements.

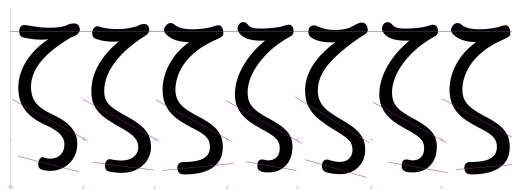
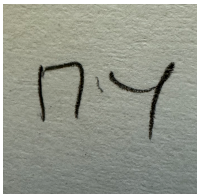
The writing is definitely following a *slow, deliberate ductus*, as if by a person still developing confidence, or someone trying a little too hard to write clearly. This is a decision implicit in the brief across scripts, so something that the Greek is entirely in sync with the overall family. But the brief for the original PlayPen typeface is “imitating casual handwriting”, which suggests a degree of confidence by the person “writing” the letters. It seems, therefore, that PlayPen Sans has moved down in the skill level of the “writer”, towards a learner level. It is not clear why this version of PlayPen needs to do this, and suggests a design direction issue. (To put it bluntly, it feels like the design direction of a typeface for wide global use for informal handwritten documents towards model a high-year primary school writer, instead of a more confident older person.)

Having put this on record, I assume that the brief wants to model a young teen’s writing, and offer comments within this parameter.

Shaping

- A alternate with bad written “faster”, to match style of Be.ta.alt1, Beta.alt3 (possibly middle bar slightly inclined, with right tip sticking out as per Alpha.alt6)
- H modulate width of alternates more (esp. a couple of narrower versions)
- K Add alternate with three-stroke construction (like the example to the left, and the usual lowercase Greek kappa)
- Ξ Alternates a bit too uniform: room for variation in width / vertical positioning of middle bar. Xi.alt2 best version for default
- Π modulate width of alternates more (esp. a couple of narrower versions), and consider two-stroke version (top bar and right leg in one; example left)
- Υ Add alternate with two-stroke version like 7 with a curved top (example left)
- Φ Add alternate with bowl stroke not touching the vertical at the top right, as per Omicron default shape

- γ Consider more versions with instroke as in gamma.alt1, since this is appropriate for slower writing
- δ Change at least one alternate to a more open top loop
- ζ Consider varying height of top of letter more across the alternates
Vary angle of main middle downstroke more, like the bottom outstroke



- λ Add more variation in the main stroke angle, and consider dropping below the baseline some bottom-left tips of the short stroke. Same for lambda.sso1
- μ mu.alt6 too narrow — consider making it a wider variant
- ν Consider adding horizontal instroke as per gamma.alt1 to some of the alternates
- ξ As per zeta: more variation in middle stroke angle: too consistent, and a bit “fast” for this style. Also consider more “curl” to the top bar of some alternates (like xi.alt4 : feels more natural for a slow writer).
- σ Make sigma.alt1 the default. Give sigma.alt5 a more upwards curling horizontal stroke (like sigma.alt2 does, possibly a bit more). sigma.alt6 too straight bar, feels too typographic. sigma generally needs more length of the bar, combinations with following tau (and pi) too flat and typographic

ιθαρος αδιαβαστος ακ
 κασα κατασταση μυα

- υ Give some alternates a horizontal instroke, like gamma.alt1
- φ Make one of the alternates with an open bowl, like theta.alt3, omicron.alt4
- ψ Modulate width of letter alternates more

In paragraphs: the top bars of pi, tau are a bit too consistently horizontal, and would benefit from a little more variation across the alternates. E.g. in this sentence

θεωρούσε ότι το έντυπο ελληνικό βιβλίο

the sequence τι το τυπ stands out from the flowing texture of the other letters.

Marks

- Έ Move tonos a bit further away from left vertical

Spacing / kerning

Letters fit well. Only attention to sigma/pi/tau combinations are noted above. Generally open fitting is appropriate for the style, and especially for the Greek.