



## CAST IT #2: Estratto da John Smith, The printer's grammar. Londra, 1755

A cura di: CAST Cooperativa Anonima Servizi Tipografici

Prefazione: James Mosley

Design: Riccardo Olocco



### PANORAMICA

*Il secondo numero di Cast It prende quest'anno come campione per mostrare i caratteri di CAST due capitoli di The printer's grammar di John Smith – "chapter 1: Of roman, italic and black printing letter" e "chapter 2: Of the different bodies and sizes of printing letter" – con una prefazione di James Mosley.*

*Molti manuali di stampatori inglesi derivano da quello di Moxon del 1683-4, e anche quelli di inizio Ottocento (Stower, 1808; Johnson, 1824 e Hansard, 1825) includono passaggi tratti direttamente dal manuale di Moxon. The printer's grammar di John Smith (se questo era il suo vero nome), pubblicato a Londra nel 1755, è diverso. Tratta di composizione,*

### CAST E TYPEDESIGNER

La fonderia digitale CAST, acronimo di Cooperativa Anonima Servizi Tipografici, è nata nel 2013 da un gruppo di typedesigner contemporanei di spicco nel panorama italiano e internazionale. In questa edizione caratteri disegnati da A. Amato, E. Ciuffo e A. D'Ellena, G. De Faccio, R. De Franceschi, R. Dietzsch, R. Olocco, L. Perondi. Sono esemplificate sedici famiglie di caratteri, quattro delle quali del tutto nuove.

### PUNTI CHIAVE

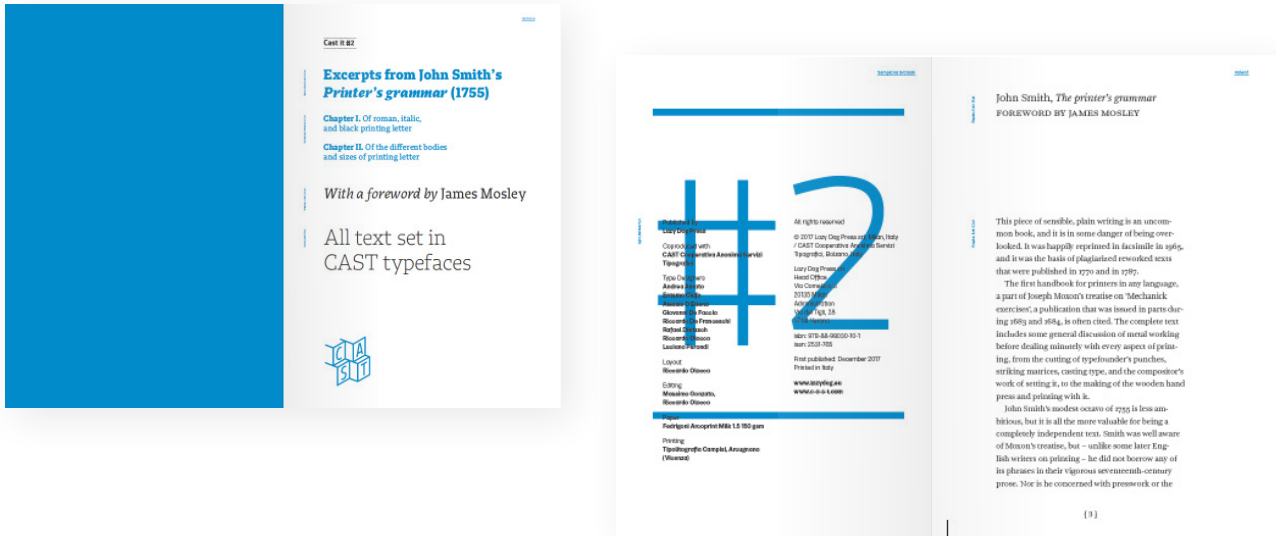
- Il contenuto riguarda un manuale tipografico di metà Settecento diverso rispetto ai modelli dell'epoca, interessato più direttamente alla composizione che alla stampa
- All'interno sono esemplificate sedici famiglie di caratteri, disegnate da alcuni tra i più riconosciuti typedesigner italiani in campo internazionale, quattro delle quali al suo debutto
- Si tratta del secondo numero di una serie periodica annuale, che riprende di volta in volta testi inerenti la storia e la cultura del carattere da stampa
- Rivolto a tutti coloro che si interessano del disegno del carattere, editori, graphic designer, docenti e studenti, o semplicemente agli amanti della forma delle lettere e della tipografia

SCHEDE TECNICA	
FORMATO	16,5 x 24 cm
PAGINE	48
CONFEZIONE	Punto metallico con dorsino in tela
EDIZIONE	Inglese
ISBN	978-88-98030-10-1
ISSN	2531-765
PREZZO	Euro 13,00
USCITA	dicembre 2017





# CAST IT #2: Estratto da John Smith, The printer's grammar. Londra, 1755



which, the founders in Paris keep to their wonted metal, and alledge, that it is of the same composition with that which is used at the king's founding-house; which serves not any other but his majesty's printing-house at the louvre, with fusil materials. It would therefore be inconsistent with the interest of the founder to cast letter for lasting; since letter, at the said printing-house in Paris, is deemed old, and worn,

when it has lost its brightness; which, tho' it delights the eyes of fame, does not please the printer, who rather chuses to see new letter have a gloomy cast, judging from thence that its metal will prove to be good. The composition of metal for letter being various, and depending upon the discretion of the founder, must needs have different effects upon [10] letter, and render it either more or less serviceable. Mr. Moxon has been so generous as to particularize the species and the quantities which he used to make metal of; and accordingly 28 lb. Of metal required 25 lb. Melted lead, mixt with 3 lb. Of iron and antimony melted together. But in Germany they use more than three ingredients to their metal; which is there made of steel, iron, copper, brass, tin, and lead; all which they incorporate with each other by means of antimony. This metal, if duly prepared, does not bend, but breaks like glass: it is harder than tin and lead; something softer than copper, and melts sooner than lead. This account I have of Mr. Struke, a printer at Lubec, who did cast, for his own use, not only large-six'd letters for titles, but also a sufficient quantity of two-lined ene-

**CHAPTER I**  
**Of Roman, Italic, and Black Printing Letter**

Conformable to the general method which is observed in grammars, we begin this also with the principles thereof, viz. Letters; with this difference, that instead of applying their signification, as in others, to the art of speaking or writing some particular language, we shall consider them as the chief of printing materials; and in the course of this chapter treat of their contexture, superficial shape, and such properties as come under the cognizance of printers, [2] booksellers, and others, who have a judgement of printing. Accordingly, we shall not confine ourselves to the bare letters of different alphabets, but shew what other sorts are comprehended in a fount of letter, cast either for sacred, ancient, or modern languages: of which, those of the last class being the most prevailing; we shall, in consequence, give the preference to the characters which are appropriated not only to our own, but other European speeches.

The types, or letters, then, which are made use of for printing of books, essays, & c. Here in England, are called either roman, italic, or black.

John Smith, *The printer's grammar*  
FOREWORD BY JAMES MOSLEY

This piece of sensible, plain writing is an uncommon book, and it is in some danger of being overlooked. It was happily reprinted in facsimile in 1966, and it was the basis of plagiarized reworked texts that were published in 1970 and in 1975.

The first handbook for printers in any language, a part of Joseph Moxon's treatise on 'Mechanick exercises', a publication that was issued in parts during 1683 and 1684, is often cited. The complete text includes some general discussion of metal-working before dealing minutely with every aspect of printing, from the cutting of typefounder's punches, setting matrices, casting type, and the compositor's work of setting it, to the making of the wooden hand press and printing with it.

John Smith's modest octavo of 1755 is less ambitious, but it is all the more valuable for being a completely independent text. Smith was well aware of Moxon's treatise, but – unlike some later English writers on printing – he did not borrow any of its phrases in their vigorous seventeenth-century prose. Nor is he concerned with presswork or the

**Section 1**  
**Of roman printing letter**

Roman, is at present the general, and almost only letter which is used for printing; and has long since been the national character not only of great Britain and Ireland, but also of Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy; whereas in Germany, and in the kingdoms which lie round the baltic, they print with letters which owe their formation to the gothic characters: nevertheless none of these nations would scruple to change types, and, with the dutch, polanders, and hungarians, to print whole works in their own language, with roman letter: and that the germans themselves, as well as those who patronize their characters, have not yet intirely quitted them, and made roman letter more universal, is chiefly owing to their apprehensions [3] of sharing the fate of the primitive printers, who, in attempting to introduce roman characters, suffered greatly, from the dislike which the learned then shewed to the works which had been done in that letter; whereby the former were obliged to return to printing in gothic character, to which men of literature were then accustomed, and which resembled the writing of monks for whom it was not difficult to persuade people to disapprove of any thing which had the least shew of bearing against monastic interest.

The same reason may be given, why the dutch have not turned the black letter out of their printing-houses, but still make use of it, especially in books of devotion, and religious treatises designed for general use; whereas curious and learned subjects are frequently printed in roman. The Germans, indeed, have more than once made essays to print prayer-books in roman letter, to try how they would be received by the public:

