



## SPECIAL EDITION

Europe - France - UK - The Netherlands - Spain - Italy

ESNA editors and authors summarize the most important developments in European higher education in 6 brilliant essays.

The ESNA network wishes everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

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### **MANUALE TIPOGRAFICO**

The Manual of Typography (1818) by Giambattista Bodoni

ESNA's news section provides an easy-to-use format to learn about the latest developments in European Higher Education. The news are selected by our team from thousands of sources and drafted to provide you with the most comprehensive overview of events.

## IMPRESSIONS OF A EUROPEAN YEAR IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By Tino Brömme, ESNA Berlin

The French higher education minister Valérie Pécresse said early in December that “the Berlin Wall between universities and the economy in France has fallen” – and her metaphor is true not only for France, but for all of Europe. Her sentence is a proper description of what has happened to universities by 2010: the former public domain has become a market, a free trade zone named European Higher Education Area. It was no easy birth after ten years of pregnancy; the child still needs care, but it is sound, nearly walks and grows well.



Not least pushed by the Lisbon Strategy, ‘knowledge triangles’ have been sown over the continent and plenty of university-business cooperations and marriages of research and higher education institutes with local industries have sprouted up, most prominently and heavily state-funded in the German *Exzellenzinitiative*, the French *Pôles de recherche et d’enseignement supérieur* and the Spanish *Campus de Excelencia Internacional*. Their aim is to (re)connect the academic Ivory Towers to regional innovation and labour market demands and to create a critical mass to emerge in international university rankings.

This year showed the proliferation as well as the limits of New Public Management in higher education. Structural reforms of universities entailed ministerial self-reflection and re-invention. Some governors kept or retrieved control over higher education decisions while semi-external supervisory boards and performance based university funding have become the norm in many places.

This structural change has often been accompanied by a loss of academic democracy, by a loss of power for teaching and research employees in favour of stronger rectors, and by broken promises (the local echoes of the ministerial Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué from 2009) of ‘full student participation’.

Due to the economic crisis, most States cut university budgets while the youth fled into academia to elude unemployment. In response – and following calls for ‘diversified funding’ – ministers and rectors put or tried to put tuition fees and access restrictions on the agenda causing furious demonstrations in Austria, Italy or France. As a matter of fact, the ‘opening’ of universities was no longer written on flags, but rather the selection of students, pricing of Masters courses, Lifelong Learning aka further qualification offers.

The European Higher Education Area was declared at the completion of the Bologna Process. The latter, instead of ending, continues as an ongoing reform of study structures. But sobriety has taken the place of enthusiasm, and the Bologna card is merely played for institutional and national reforms without any serious international perspective or cultural European attitude.

There was no lack of scandals in 2010: bribery in education ministries in Malta and Hungary, PhD and diploma fraud in Germany, the Czech Replic and Holland, organised exam cheating in Russia and Turkey, plagiarism continued to be an international problem, especially in the UK where the issue of human trafficking was addressed in regard to student visa restrictions for overseas students.

Extremely high compensations for rectors were perceived as scandalous in countries such as the Netherlands and the UK, but were only phenomena in this new market sector where wage squeezing and precarity among academics and researchers are nor rarity anymore.

Internationalisation reached new heights as cross border university cooperations

increased, as well as internal continental and incoming overseas student mobility. Research and structural funds of the EU served, in particular in the South and the East, as development aid; poor countries experienced signals of brain drain and others faced the Australian truth that 'mobility' means first of all 'migration' with the aim of settling in the richer country.

Private higher education was on the rise in 2010 while public universities enlarged their commercial activities. The markets of student housing, student loans, MBAs, distant and e-learning and, as usual in periods of recession, further education in general, boomed.

Demography and the looming lack of highly qualified technical staff led to a reversal of discrimination to social sciences and the humanities. The closure of Philosophy at Middlesex, UK, was one prominent example, cuts of 'less important' language courses in Denmark, another. The growing dyslexia of French students announced the beginnings of the long path of cultural ignorance lying ahead.

Europe hasn't found its identity yet, at least not in universities. Instead, it seems to have lost it. National location policy is the word of order for the European Higher Education Year. And also the term "foreign education policy" turns out to be highly ambiguous to for a possible common cause of the 47 nations of the Bologna Process.

For a European this is not an encouraging resumé. Only Europe could be the emergence from our self-incurred particularism. But 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world' also enforces competition among knowledge markets within Europe. And this is hardly the way to build a European House.

## THE SILENCED MAJORITY: REFORM NOW, ASK QUESTIONS LATER

*By Morgan Rothwell, ESNA Correspondent Paris*



In a context of financial uncertainty and growing fears of decline, France has jumped on the bandwagon promoting Higher Education reform and streamlining as the way to boost the economy. Such a philosophy was already instrumental in the proclamation of the Bologna Process in 1999 but has been steadily growing ever since the sub-prime crisis plunged capitalist economies into their biggest dip since the Great Depression. In consequence, governments across the board have been emphasising the role of innovation and research through higher learning as the way to reinforce competitiveness. In France, this has meant reform of the University system and research institutions under the leadership of Higher Education Minister Valérie Pécresse. Since her appointment as minister in 2007, she has launched the campaigns of 'LRU' reform on University autonomy, transformed the way in which research is organised in the country, and pushed 'masterisation' ever further. The year 2010 was upheld as an important one for these reforms as they reached completion and their first aftershocks were to be absorbed.

Throughout its actions, France has always had an underlying obsession with the concept of rang (rank). Whether it is political, economic or social, a feeling of exceptionalism, born in the 1789 revolution, lingers and promotes a quest for grandeur at the international level. In terms of Higher Education, this has been translated into a perpetual feeling of injustice regarding global rankings and the perception of French higher learning abroad. This kind of obsession was clearly visible during the month of July when Valérie Pécresse went to promote France's system in Shanghai, ahead of the August release of the Shanghai rankings which showed steadfast stagnation on the part of French institutions.

However, even though the international perception of French degrees has not changed, the overhaul of the system undertaken by the Sarkozy government and Valérie Pécresse reached its final stage in 2010. Indeed, as of January 2011, 90



per cent of Universities will have reached autonomous status. In addition, the PRES (Poles of Research and Higher Education) have been set up so that universities, grandes ecoles and research bodies can coordinate their activities. To this end, the national research body CNRS has been streamlined into a mechanism to disburse funds across research sectors while the 'Grand Emprunt' has been set up to inject 11 billion Euros into higher education and research. The French system has also been additionally 'Bolognised' through masterisation and the re-organisation of the academic year over ten months. The great emphasis which has been placed on higher education since the beginning of the century was meant to culminate in 2010 and begin to yield its first results but has caused nothing of the sort.

Indeed, while these reforms have been pushed forward with a high rate of efficiency, substantial protest movements have been formed warning that they are misguided. In fact, the new stance that the government has taken vis-a-vis research has threatened some of the core values of the scientific community such as peer review. Through a new bonus for excellence of professors engaging in research and through a reform of the CNRS, the government has invited itself into a new position of authority over what is useful research or not. As such, several members of the research community have refused this bonus on the basis of their disagreement. Even though these actions have intensified the civil disobedience against the Sarkozy-Pécresse reform package in 2010, the government's position is not compromised as its status as main contributor to research gives it relative impunity.

Further than the research community, the changing landscape of higher learning in France has left a sour taste in the mouths of students. Indeed, in July, the government attempted to reduce contributions to students by prohibiting the accumulation of housing benefits with family allocations. Further, when the French academic year was lengthened to last ten months instead of nine in August of 2010, it took several weeks for the government to announce that this would be joined by an extension of bursaries to ten months. Additionally, UNEF, the French student union, announced that average costs for the new university year rose by 3,3 per cent and denounced 28 institutions for charging illegal amounts of enrolment fees to students. Amidst these developments, stories broke out of branch campuses such as the Sorbonne in Abu-Dhabi yielding enormous profits while university buildings in France were being termed 'decrepit' and housing shortages in various cities were being solved by putting students into furnished shipping containers.

All in all, while 2010 was to be the year of results for the Sarkozy-Pécresse reform package, it has only resulted in a greater distance between government and the higher education and research communities. While the government wonders how more privatisation and streamlining of higher learning can boost competitiveness on a global scale, students are worried about high rates of graduate unemployment and researchers on the compromises they have to make for the sake of profitability. Although these issues are raising great fears, October 2010 was not May 1968 over again. Even though the social benefits gained from 1968 have been gradually rolled back until now and retirement reform ensured strong mobilisation against a faltering government, the Higher Education and Research communities were late to join the protest initiated by unions and few in numbers. It may be too early to be fatalistic, but there appears to be an unspoken consensus in France which sees changes such as those we have seen this year as inevitable.



## UNSUSTAINABLE PROMISES

*By Annika Henderson, UK Education Correspondent*

It's been a turbulent year for UK politics, with the bowing out of the long reigning Labour party, leaving a broken, recession-crippled nation in its wake, to make way for the double-headed beast that is the Con-Lib coalition, full of promises of fair and honest politics. And what a way to end it, with a mass protest from a generation that has remained positively dormant for the majority of the decade. Reality has finally hit the youngsters, who realise that it is they

who will have to pick up the pieces and bear the brunt of the austerity measures; the final straw being the betrayal by the Lib Dems, who in the election campaign promised to fight their corner in exchange for support, yet last Thursday backtracked by voting for the trebling of University tuition fees, despite explicitly signing a pledge not to do so.

With the slim majority of 21 votes, the proposal to increase the fee cap in England to £9000 was passed, to the dismay of the thousands gathered outside the commons, laden with placards and contempt, hoping their last stand would count. 21 MPs abstained and 2 Lib Dems and a Tory aide stepped down, leaving a splintered and wounded coalition, vulnerable to attack from new Labour man, Ed Miliband. This final betrayal along with the actual reality of education costs rocketing, universities facing bankruptcy, the arts facing a big squeeze, Irish youth forced to desert their own nation in hope of better prospects elsewhere and unemployment rates soaring, all proved too much, pushing the generation into revolt.

The reality is that Labour's promises in the last decade were unsustainable. Spending and borrowing were out of control and now the next generation will have to adapt their deep ingrained way of thinking in order to survive the cuts. Labour's 'education for all' and '50% of youngsters into university', despite its good intentions was highly damaging to the University system, which resulted in many polytechnics gaining university status and students, better suited to a practical apprenticeship, trying to force themselves into the university mould. It is many of these newly accredited universities that now face bankruptcy, with all five of those named in the UCU's 'most at risk' list, only granted degree awarding powers in the last decade.

The shock for many graduates, few of whom had had any experience in the real working world after being pushed straight through the education system from age 4 to 21, forced to sign on to the dole and face months, even years of low-skilled jobs, a move back home and low self-esteem, after promises of wealth and success after uni, was enormous. Perhaps looking to Britain's European neighbours for guidance is the way forward, where the majority of students do not rush straight into university but take time to ensure they make a well informed decision. The thought of signing a thirty year debt agreement, as the coalition propose, at the age of 17 is none to appealing, so putting off university for a few years, to harden up to the real working world, may be a wise move.

It was unfortunate that as the day of protests drew to a close last week, scenes of police clashes and an attack on the Prince of Wales and his wife Camilla, left a somewhat bitter taste in the mouth of the general public. Despite winning over a fair amount of support and sympathy during the campaign, students made many enemies, with much of the public looking on disapprovingly at their acts of rebellion. It appears, an attack on the royal family, in the run-up to an increasingly popular royal wedding, was a step too far. A sad finale for the students and protesters, in what was the biggest show of political engagement amongst the younger generations in years.

So what for the next decade? Higher education will have to stay on its toes, with a full frontal attack on the arts, funding dramatically cut across all other sectors, imminent university merges and a whole lot more paperwork, ensuring those from less fortunate backgrounds have sufficient access. The youth will also have to work hard to regain the nation's respect by channelling their frustration into other causes, because more cuts, across the board, are most certainly on their way.

## DUTCH SURREALISM: HIGH GOALS AND LOW BUDGETS

*By Frank Vanaerschot,  
ESNA Correspondent Brussels*



In 2010 the economic crisis trickled down to public services. In the Netherlands and many other European countries, this also meant scaling down higher education budgets, jeopardising democratic access and quality of higher education.

The first effect of the crisis on higher education came from society itself. Many youngsters preferred prolonging studies to entering an insecure future on the labour market. 2010 started with the observation that student number had risen twice more than had been expected: 6,1 % more students in universities and 5 % more in vocational schools. One could argue this was a positive trend, but only if the budget would have followed it.

Very soon however, discussions about abolishing study finance reached new heights. In February students reacted against the government's intention to replace this scholarship with a loan system by occupying campus sites in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Nijmegen and Utrecht. There was no organisation behind these actions, just support by the student union and some rectors. But the whole issue was postponed when the government fell in February over the countries' mission in Afghanistan. This meant budget cuts were on hold, but so was education policy as such, causing much uncertainty over upcoming reforms.

A governmental commission issued a study in late March, indicating 1 billion Euro could be saved by replacing study financing with study loans, increasing the tuition fees and halting free public transport for students. The student union LSVB reacted by publishing an own survey simultaneously. The conclusions were sharp: 20 % of the students will halt their studies and 42 % of the pupils won't start higher studies anymore if the study loans are implemented. The national universities and vocational schools associations VSNU and HBO-council stated the effects of these plans on the quality of higher education will be disastrous: "The number of students has doubled since 1980. These positive results require an effort, not a cheaper production process."

One month later, yet another commission (Veerman) issued its report. This time with an appeal to rationalise higher education. Nearly all stakeholders defended this call for focussing on excellence, selection at the gate, increasing tuition fees and decreasing the separation between universities and vocational schools.

The Veerman commission argued these measures were necessary if The Netherlands wanted to be among the five most competitive knowledge economies. VSNU and the HBO council later translated this report into a demand for a 1,5 billion Euro increase of the higher education budget. Grahame Lock, a philosophy professor at Oxford, Leiden and Nijmegen, did not agree: "Selection at the gate is being applauded because good students are being supported. The report, however, aims to produce efficient labour market forces at low costs. Selection means choosing the students who can quickly absorb course material successfully without taking up unnecessary and costly courses out of intellectual curiosity."

The unified front of higher education stakeholders wasn't built to last. It crumbled down quickly when the electoral campaign reinvigorated the study finance debate, dividing political parties, student unions and university umbrella organisations. The elections were held on June 9, but it would take until the end of September before a minority government between the liberal VVD and Christian democrat CDA, supported by the right wing populist PVV was formed. Halbe Zijlstra (VVD) became the new state secretary for higher education. The new government is now beginning to effectuate budget cuts. By now, a 370 million Euro cut is in the pipeline: the government wants to sanction universities for their students who do not finish their studies in time. For every student that has more than two years of delay, institutions will receive 3.000 euro less per year. Universities fear more than 6.000 jobs are in danger due to this measure. Students held regional protests all over the country last week and plan a national manifestation in Den Haag to 'celebrate' Zijlstra's birthday on the 21st of January 2011.

The higher education administration attempts to fuse budget cuts with a policy along the lines of the Veerman commission. A policy, many believe, which necessitates a budget increase. A policy, others think, is discriminatory, whether it is properly funded or not. The Dutch government tries to become a top knowledge economy by slashing the budget – an outright surreal idea.

If 2010 trends are an indicator of what future Dutch higher education will look like, the average Dutch citizen's chances of enjoying a high quality university education are shrinking.

## **A MAN OF LETTERS AND A STRONG COMMON COMMITMENT THE YEAR IN SPANISH HIGHER EDUCATION**

*By Olga Rodríguez Trujillo, ESNA Correspondent Barcelona*



The implementation of the Bologna Process in Spain in late 2008 as part of the National University Strategy 2015 was greeted with violent student protests in Madrid and Barcelona and a strong rejection from public opinion and academic stakeholders. As a result, in 2010, many changes were brought about as the quality assurance agency ANECA accredited 80 percent of all Spanish study programmes with new 'European' curricula.

An important factor to reach this was certainly the strategic decision of the Zapatero government to appoint Ángel Gabilondo, a professor of philosophy from Madrid, as the Minister of Education in April 2009. His mediation revived the dialogue between the stakeholders of higher education and emphasised the government's commitment to education in a country hit hard by the financial crisis.

With Gabilondo a new kind of stability and political common sense arrived to the educational system and the debate about a national prioritization gained pace. As a result of Gabilondo's intervention, the National Action Plan 2010-11, an overall reform project which spans from primary school to lifelong education, was signed by all major political parties and academic stakeholders in early 2010. Focusing on 12 different fields, the Plan aims to reduce the high school dropout rates, to strengthen foreign language education, to raise the acceptance and quality of vocational training, to promote the economic use of scientific achievements and more. The ministry of Finance has freed 590m Euro for more than one hundred low budget projects of the Action Plan in the upcoming year. This provides financial stability to university initiatives and services, aiming to solve the above mentioned problems.

On behalf of the ministry, Gabilondo reapproved the national project of opening universities and improving student and graduate careers. The exclusion of grants and scholarships from the cuts that all other public sectors had to undergo in the current economic crisis of Spain was very important to demonstrate this commitment as grants and scholarships for needy students (and pupils) amount to more than half of the 2,9bn Euro general education budget. Additionally, his ministry has guaranteed that tuition fees would not be raised before 2013, as long as the promised new grant system is not in place.

An important step for Spain towards an innovative, profitable and international higher education sector is the flagship initiative of the government plan "International Campus of Excellence". The second round of this excellency initiative started this year and has led to dozens of cooperating universities, companies and public local entities. Even though due to the crisis the budget of the second part of this initiative has been reduced, it nevertheless represents Spain's commitment to the so called "knowledge triangle"; the idea that research, higher education, regions or cities and local enterprises should cooperate closer to foster economic growth.

Spain, named after Ireland and Portugal as one of the next candidates for national bankruptcy, has shown a strong commitment to education and higher education in this year. In addition, it has made strong choices to back up its policies by electing a man of culture like Ángel Gabilondo as minister of education, by engaging with strategy and conviction in the innovation of higher education, and by making an economic sacrifice for students and against social exclusion.

## A REASON TO CHEER FOR THE BARONS!

von Fabio Santelli, ESNA-Korrespondent Rom

2010 was no ordinary year for Italian universities. The protest movement against the government's education and science policy gained unprecedented pace, uniting students, lecturers, researchers and even some of the rectors, and brought about a harshness of arguments without comparison.

Well aware of the flaws and inefficiencies of the higher education institutions, the entire academic community has stood up against existential cuts to the sector and started to fight for the survival of universities. This movement, with mass demonstrations all over the country, occupied faculties, striking researchers and examination boycotts has, as it seems, created a new consciousness, a new appreciation of the intrinsic value of education and training. Up and foremost it is the young generation of students on the streets who are annoyed by a system that lets them no other option than leaving the country in order to pursue a professional career, that does not reward personal efforts and achievements and destroys all hope in the future. With student support measures almost completely sacrificed on the altar of budget cuts, these young people face rising tuition fees and continuously decreasing quality of education.

Even OECD statistics, which show Italy in the last positions regarding higher education expenditure, did not keep the government from further budget cuts in the ministry of education and sciences by 20 per cent or 1,4 billion Euro over five years between 2008 and 2013. The additional 400m Euro given this year in order to rebalance the university budget appeared as a joke in face of the fact that 678 million had been cut last year alone.

The balance of universities remains in the red, threatening many institutions with insolvency. Departments can't recruit or improve their structures, scientists and professors are hit by precarious working conditions and frozen salaries, the newcomers in science, as already said, do not find career opportunities. Consequently this year saw the most massive protests and strikes of employees in the tertiary sector, with academics denying examinations since they did not get paid.

In the midst of this movement, the Italian government tried to forward the new higher education act – known as Gelmini reforms, named after the Education minister Mariastella Gelmini. This law fosters competition amongst universities and students, proposes new regulations for academic staff appointments and claims to honour student achievements. The reform was launched by Gelmini in times that were characterized by mostly negative media coverage about higher education, which gave her the chance to promote the new legislation as cure for the whole inefficient and sick system.

Instead of imposing norms and standards leading to more transparency and less corruption amongst the mighty rectors and deans – the so called barons – the reforms tend to make vague promises and aims at reducing the waste of resources simply by reducing the resources themselves, leaving the universities in a fight for every remaining crumb.

Most members of the academic community are convinced that a "low-budget" attempt to reform is nonsense. The essential promise to improve the working conditions for scientists and university administrators is rendered absurd, since less appointments and even less vacancies for academics, will not change nothing in the system itself. Without additional funds, there will be no new jobs and consequently no change of generations in the teaching sector: A reason to cheer for most of the Barons!

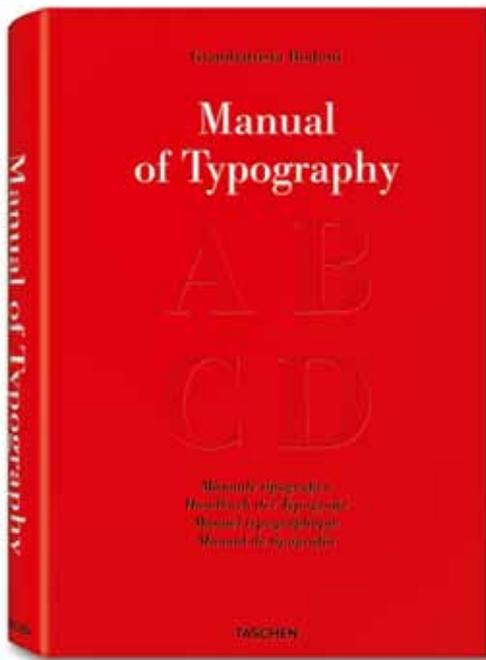
*(Translation: A. Henderson and I. Grim)*



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## MANUALE TIPOGRAFICO

### THE MANUAL OF TYPOGRAPHY (1818) BY GIAMBATTISTA BODONI



Stephan Füssel (Ed.)  
Taschen | Oct. 2010  
ISBN 978-3-8365-0552-9  
1208 pages hardcover €49.99

**Order**

Giambattista Bodoni's *Manuale tipografico* re-edited by Taschen is a great 'incunable' book on the art of printing. The work contains stunning arrangements of 142 roman alphabets, numerous scripts, exotic typefaces and a wonderful collection of ornaments. It has 279 compact pages and an additional leaflet about the life of Giambattista Bodoni.

Born in a family of printers, Bodoni left home as a boy to go to Rome, where he served an apprenticeship at the press of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, the missionary arm of the Roman Catholic church. Together with his father he collected a standard encyclopedia for printing the alphabet with *Manuale tipografico* in 1818. The encyclopedia was first published posthumously in a limited edition of just 250 and features 142 sets of Roman and italic typefaces, borders, ornaments, symbols and flowers as well as typefaces from different alphabets including Greek, Hebrew, Russian, Arabic, Phoenician, Armenian, Coptic and Tibetan. Bodoni was the official printer for the Duke of Parma and his typist philosophy was founded on four main principles including uniformity, design, sharpness, good taste and charm.

The Bodoni typeface is still widely used to this day, both in digital media and in print, and TASCHEN's accurate reprint of his masterwork gives an excellent opportunity to inquire into the origins of the Bodoni typeface and learn about its creator. As for its historical meaning, this book can be considered the bible of typography. It is truly one of the most monumental collections of fonts made by man in a time when cultures and languages weren't as tightly fused and borders weren't just a plane trip away. This astonishing typography encyclopedia is justified by four decades of work by Bodoni. It was his career and lifetime achievement.

At the end of the *Manuale tipografico* is a leaflet with an extended foreword of the reference material edited by Stephan Füssel. It is recommended to first read this introduction and the translation of his (and his widow's) preface, to fully appreciate the context and the life of the great scientist. It is fascinating to hear Bodoni's widow fathom the importance of the *Manuale Tipografico* in a letter she wrote to the Princess of Austria:

To Her Majesty the Imperial Princess, Maria Luigia Archduchess of Austria, Duchess of Parma, Piacenza, Guastalla, etc. etc.

*Your Majesty,*

*In every age, within every nation, there has always been the noble competition to create monuments in honour of those Princes who are worthy of the gratitude of men, to suitably transmit their eminent and illustrious memory to posterity. Statues, paintings, temples by the most celebrated artists, either perished in ruins, or were devoured by flames: but it was not so for the press. This art, the most useful of human discoveries, as it speedily diffuses all other discoveries; this art, that spread all over the world from Germany where it originated, endures fires, vicissitudes, time itself. It alone was able to broadcast the virtues of monarchs, the great deeds of our ancestors, and the ideas of the most sublime minds.*

As a reference book this one is not fantastic. There is no table of contents, no footnotes, not even captions or justifications. It is just a book of fonts. For this reason this book is for anyone who loves typography a beauty.

*Bianca Macovei, ESNA Berlin*