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Penna volans Discovered: Analysis
of a New Exemplar of Calligraphic Virtuosity
by Baldericus van Horicke (Brussels, ca. 1616)

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IN 1797, FOLLOWING THE death of Pierre Wouters, who was canon of the collegiate Church of Saint Gummarus of Lier (Brabant), treasurer, and royal librarian, an extensive inventory of the artistic works and other items he had accumulated in his lifetime was published in great descriptive detail. This text served as a guide for potential buyers who might attend the

This text presents some of the findings from the research project led by Enrique Villalba (UC3M) entitled *Del manuscrito a las pantallas: Memoria, artefactos y prácticas culturales (del siglo XV a nuestros días)*, 2016–2020. Reference: HAR2016-76550P. Spain. Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness. This work has been supported by the Madrid Government (Comunidad de Madrid-Spain) under the Multiannual Agreement with UC3M in the line of Excellence of University Professors (EPUC3MXX), and in the context of the V PRICIT (Regional Programme of Research and Technological Innovation). We also appreciate the kind support provided from the Special Collection Del Olmo-Vilas (Imprenta Municipal Artes del Libro, Ayuntamiento de Madrid). We would also like to sincerely thank Maria Stieglecker (ÖAW), Jill Gage (Newberry Library), and Juliane Trede (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek) for the technical comments about the watermarks.

auction of his possessions. The resulting catalogue of “rare and numerous collection of prints and drawings,” represented an elegant and abundantly stocked Wunderkammer for bibliophiles that was very much to Baroque taste, as can be seen from other public sales and auctions of the era.¹ Thanks to the precise descriptions recorded in this catalogue, those interested in that year’s spring auction would have been able to read about the bound volume of calligraphic script and other ornament executed by Baldericus van Horicke, a “celebrated master of writing” once called a “prodigy and miracle of the pen.”²

These details would appear again in the biographical entry for Van Horicke in Christiaan Kramm’s *De levens en werken der Hollandsche en Vlaamsche kunstschilders, beeldhouwers, graveurs en bouwmeesters, van den vroegsten tot op onzen tijd*, published in 1859. The previously published details helped Kramm compose his brief but substantial biographical entry dedicated to Baldericus van Horicke, the distinguished calligrapher who is the subject of the present study.³ On 10 February 2019, more than two centuries after the description of a volume with sixty-four pages of “fanciful writings” executed by Van Horicke in the Wouters sale catalogue, the Parisian auctioneer Pierre Bergé & Associés presented an intriguing calligraphic copybook for public auction. The item was offered without attribution or detailed description on the auction house’s website. It was described merely as a generic “livre d’écriture manuscrit” from the seventeenth or eighteenth century. The volume consisted of a set of eight specimens

1 Menno Jonker, “Drawing Attention to Works on Paper in the Haarlem Newspaper, 1660–99,” *Master Drawings* 57, no. 3 (2019): 325–48.

2 N. J. T’Sas Demarneffe, *Catalogue de la rare et nombreuse collection d’estampes et de desseins qui composaient le cabinet de feu M. Pierre Wouters*, [. . .] (Brussels: G. Huygue, 1797), 305. This volume sold at auction in 1797 constitutes the majority of an item that, since 1941, has been held at the Newberry Library of Chicago (Wing MS +ZW 6465.H782 Vault) under the title: *Prodigium imo miraculum* [etc.], 1638 studied by Wouter Bracke, “Erycius Puteanus’ Elogia project, Balduinus Horickius and Chicago, Newberry Library, Wing MS ZW 6465 .H782,” *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 69, no. 1–2 (2020): 139–69.

3 Christiaan Kramm, *De levens en werken der Hollandsche en Vlaamsche kunstschilders, beeldhouwers, graveurs en bouwmeesters, van den vroegsten tot op onzen tijd*. (Amsterdam: Gebroeders Diederichs, 1857), 750.

showing a variety of calligraphy exercises of great flamboyance and perfection, cobbled together to form a single copybook.⁴ It was subsequently acquired by a Spanish collector residing in Madrid, who kindly made it available to us for study. The results of our investigations and analysis of the original led us to conclude that it was an unpublished copybook (hereinafter referred to as the “Cuaderno Español”) created by Van Horicke.

Determining the authorship of the Cuaderno Español was the first step in our study of this hitherto unknown item. The eight specimens, described as “single handwritten artifacts,” were and are problematic because they raise questions about their original function. Unlike the many didactic or educational printed writing manuals published in Spain, the work in question remained unpublished. Were these merely skillful exercises for the author’s own personal use? Were they exemplars intended to advertise his technical capacities and his versatility in reproducing scripts to possible clients? Or were they gifts for a member of the political and cultural elite: an example of *captatio benevolentiae*? Further, were they created for a specific person, and thus written privately, or did they represent practical exercises that served as a model for those learning to write in the context of a courtly education? In terms of specific material details, what is signified by the fact that an oval scrap of paper with the calligraphed figure of a horse, cut from elsewhere, was glued onto folio 6v (see fig. 6)?

To begin to answer these questions, this article will also delve into the limited information available to us on Van Horicke’s life and work through an examination of the relevant bibliographic material and a detailed analysis of the strokes deployed by the calligrapher in this copybook. The presence of small pen exercises on the blank areas of the sheets—clear attempts to reproduce Van Horicke’s originals—also suggests that the Cuaderno Español was employed as an aid for learning calligraphy, either in the same era or in a later moment. The information uncovered by this study furthers our understanding of the uses and practices of manuscript circulation explored elsewhere by Fernando Bouza Álvarez, and also serves to reconstruct the

4 The general description of this *Livre d’écriture manuscrit* or “intéressant cahier d’écriture du XVII^e ou du XVIII^e siècle” is accessible through the Pierre Bergé & Associés online catalogue: <https://www.pba-auctions.com/lot/96363/9840753?>

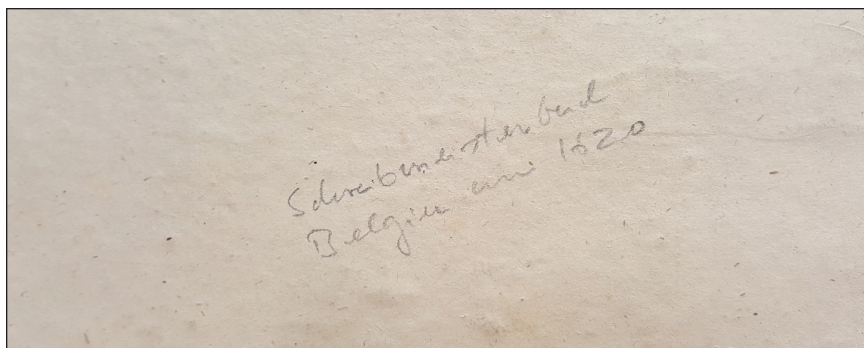


FIGURE 1. Modern-day pencil notation: Schreibmeisterbuch | Belgien um 1620.

“fortune of the exemplar,” or the traceability over time of an original, high-quality manuscript.⁵

Authorship, Production, and Historical Context

Our first objective was to reliably determine the authorship of the manuscript. A preliminary inspection was inconclusive. Initially, a simple modern-day notation in pencil, in German and located on the front endpaper, was the only direct clue: “Schreibmeisterbuch | Belgien um 1620” (fig. 1).

This purported date, falling within the golden age of European calligraphy, situates the copybook in an era that was exceptionally rich in scribal experimentation. Between 1600 and 1650, there was an extraordinary concentration in Europe of virtuosos of the pen with the highest degrees of expertise and writing proficiency.⁶ Many of these renowned masters of the art of writing were at times attached to royal courts with substantial political and economic power; unsurprisingly, such institutions sought to further their own cultural agendas via the promotion of the arts.

5 Fernando Bouza Álvarez, *Corre manuscrito: Una historia cultural del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2001).

6 Herman de La Fontaine Verwey, “The Golden Age of Dutch Calligraphy,” in *Miniatures, Script, Collections: Essays Presented to G. I. Lieftinck*, ed. J. P. Gumbert and M. J. M. de Haan (Amsterdam: Van Gendt, 1976), 69–78.

This was the case for the court of Archduke Albert and Princess Isabel Clara Eugenia in Brussels, whose patronage famously attracted Jan Brueghel the Elder, Peter Paul Rubens, and Anthony Van Dyck, among others.⁷ Thus, the reference to Van Horicke as a “prodigy and miracle of the pen” should be considered amidst many other extraordinary talents of the highest order and abilities who could likewise be considered “prodigies of the art of writing.”

“When there is someone who can teach it to him well”

It is not known who introduced Van Horicke to the court in Brussels or how he came to enjoy access to that privileged realm. Regardless, he was able to integrate himself into those very diverse groups of palace officials who alternated with tutors, equerries, lodging masters, singing teachers, ladies-in-waiting, chamber secretaries, and so-called “hombres de placer” or buffoons. As Fernando Bouza states, “writing could be a means of entry to the Court for those who had none and were vying to find one; at the same time, having become an element of distinction in some of its multiple forms, it was itself defining privileged spaces that, once effectively disseminated, perhaps could be imitated more or less successfully by those still outside that illustrious privileged space.”⁸ Nor do we have information about who put forward his candidacy as calligraphy master to the pages and royal

7 The cultural atmosphere and patronage of the arts under Princess Isabel are covered in works such as Marie de Villermont, *L'infante Isabelle gouvernante des Pays-Bas* (Paris: Librairie S. François, 1912); Luc Duerloo and Werner Thomas, eds., *Albrecht en Isabella, 1598–1621* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998); Cordula van Wyhe, ed., *Isabel Clara Eugenia: Female Sovereignty in the Courts of Madrid and Brussels* (London: Paul Holberton, 2011); Elisa García Prieto, *Una corte en femenino: Servicio áulico y carrera cortesana en tiempos de Felipe II* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2018); and Annemarie Jordan, “Mujeres mecenas de la casa de Austria y la infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia,” in *El Arte en la corte de los Archiduques Alberto de Austria e Isabel Clara Eugenia (1598–1633): Un reinado imaginado*, ed. Alejandro Vergara (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 1999), 118–19.

8 Fernando Bouza, “Usos cortesanos de la escritura: Sobre lo escrito en los espacios áulicos del Siglo de Oro,” *Cultura Escrita & Sociedad*, no. 3 (2006): 9–14.

offspring, much less about when he began his tenure, yet his presence as a teacher of the art of writing should be framed within the usual practices of educating cultivated aristocrats all over Europe. These processes, resources, and strategies for educating princes and noblemen in early-modern Europe produced disparate results. The search for pedagogical distinction that was intrinsic to court life naturally extended to the realm of calligraphic art. The resulting teaching instruments ranged from moralistic treatises to handwritten instructions left by parents to their children as guides to virtuous living—the so-called *agujas de marear* or navigational compasses—to the inevitable *Espejos* or *Relojes de Príncipes* (Mirrors or Clocks for Princes) studied by Alfredo Alvar.⁹ Therefore, the use of citations from the very successful *Floresta Española* (1574) by Melchor de Santa Cruz in the Cuaderno Español fits in well with this desire to teach reading and writing skills by means of examples drawn from books in which fables, maxims, and a variety of exemplary teachings were used to shape the moral values of future princes and monarchs.¹⁰

Learning to write correctly was integral to the mastery of skills, readings, and subject matter demanded of future princes and monarchs. Indeed, Philip II's meticulous bureaucratic and scriptophilic zeal is evident in a letter to his daughters, the young princesses Catalina Micaela and Isabel Clara Eugenia (the latter being the future sovereign of the Low Countries), written from Lisbon on 1 October 1582. He dedicated an entire paragraph of his letter to discussing didactic methods used to instruct their brother, the young Diego Félix of Austria (1575–1582), as he learned to write. The monarch wrote, “I hope that with this, he learns to write with good penmanship. And until he does it well, it is better for him not to write, because it is preferable for him to learn to join the letters later, when there is someone there who can teach it to him well.”¹¹ That “someone who can teach it to

9 Alfredo Alvar Ezquerro, *Un maestro en tiempos de Felipe II: Juan López de Hoyos y la enseñanza humanista en el siglo XVI* (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2014).

10 Iveta Nakládalová, “Tratados de educación,” in *La lectura docta en la primera Edad Moderna, 1450–1650* (Madrid: Abada, 2013), 21–68. Aurora Egido, *La voz de las letras en el Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Abada, 2003), 31.

11 Fernando Bouza, ed., *Cartas de Felipe II a sus hijas* (Madrid: Akal, 1998), 93–94.

him well” clearly alluded to the writing masters embedded in the court of Madrid. Such was the case of the celebrated Francisco Lucas, teacher of Ferdinand, Prince of Asturias (1571–1578). The situation would be replicated with Van Horicke thirty years later in the court of Brussels, with a now-adult Isabel Clara Eugenia at the peak of her power as the visible head of the Spanish government in Flanders until her death in 1633.¹²

At the present time, the limited biographical information about Van Horicke suggests a birth date of around 1595–1600 and records his death (according to the parish records of Brussels) on 25 July 1643.¹³ He himself provides some autobiographical details on the cover pages of some of his autograph manuscripts, recalling his profession as an instructor and the clientele that he served: the Archdukes of Austria, Albert and Isabel Clara Eugenia. In this sense, his *cursus honorum* close to the court was no different from that of some of his contemporaries. In Spain, Díaz Morante, for example, had a similarly close relationship to the cardinal-infante, teaching him the art of writing in the context of a high courtly culture of penmanship characterized by extreme perfection.¹⁴ That Van Horicke was initially a schoolmaster who worked in an elevated Catholic environment should not be overlooked. This was in contrast to other calligraphers and artists such as Jodocus Hondius or the peculiar Paulus de Kempenaer, an emblemist, calligrapher, and secretary of the Council of Brabant and active member of Protestant society born around 1554 in Brussels, who would emigrate from Antwerp to Leiden around 1584 ahead of advancing Catholic forces.¹⁵

12 For Francisco Lucas, see Egido, *La voz de las letras en el Siglo de Oro*, 31.

13 Laurent Guillo, “État des recherches sur le Corpus Horicke: Quatorze recueils d’airs et de chansons notés sur vélin, illustrés de traits de plume (Bruxelles, c. 1635–1645),” in *Poésie, musique et société: L’air de cour en France au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Georgie Durosoir (Liège: Mardaga, 2006), 125–33; Laurent Guillo, “De la gravure au trait de plume: L’illustration des recueils d’airs de cour du Corpus Horicke,” in *Les plaisirs de l’Arsenal: Poésie, musique, danse et érudition au XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Élise Dutray-Lecoin, Martine Lefèvre, and Danielle Muzerelle (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2018), 349–72.

14 José Luis Gonzalo Sánchez-Molero, “La evolución del aprendizaje de la escritura en la corte de Felipe II,” *Cultura Escrita & Sociedad*, no. 3 (2006): 15–57 at 29.

15 Ton Chelen, “Jodocus Hondius’s *Theatrum artis scribendi* Examined Anew,” *Quaerendo* 34, no. 1–2 (2004): 53–86, <https://doi.org/10.1163/1570069041704998>; Alastair Hamilton,

Unlike many other contemporaneous master calligraphers, Van Horicke left behind no known treatise or printed work and, therefore, essentially cultivated the art of writing “ad vivum,” as opposed to the “ars artificialiter scribendi,” or the use of a printing press.¹⁶ Thus, knowledge of his work is based exclusively on the manuscript oeuvre that has survived to the present. This circumstance might explain his relative obscurity over the centuries when compared to other authors who did commit their methods and didactic knowledge to the printing press in the form of treatises or manuals on the art of writing. Another reason for Van Horicke’s limited historical footprint is that many of the modern studies of the work of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century calligraphers do not include him (as in the case of the selection of two hundred calligraphic works published by Peter Jessen or the extraordinary survey by Claude Mediavilla).¹⁷ For all of the above reasons, the appearance of the Cuaderno Español in the aforementioned auction in 2019 represents a fortuitous discovery that enhances our knowledge of this singular master of the pen.

It should be remembered that Europe’s early-modern calligraphic explosion had been gestating since the late sixteenth century. The flowering of handwritten culture, divorced from its literary or administrative uses, brought with it attempts to systematize and establish rules and precepts. Thus, in an atmosphere of professional competition, there was a need to differentiate or at least to produce prefaces that explained the uniqueness of the work to the reader, vaunting its innovation and highlighting what set it apart from the works of other authors. Booming cities like Amsterdam, The Hague, Antwerp, Rotterdam, and Haarlem, in which numerous writing masters developed their skills, were becoming hotbeds of calligraphic

“Paulus de Kempnaer, ‘non moindre Philosophe que tres-bon escrivain,’” *Quaerendo* 10, no. 4 (1980): 293–335, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157006980X00176>; Daan Van Heesch, “Paulus de Kempnaer and the Political Exploitation of Hieronymus Bosch in the Dutch Revolt,” *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 41, no. 1–2 (2019): 5–38.

16 Fernando Bouza, “De main en main: Le manuscrit comme forme de publication,” in *Hétérographes: Formes de l’écrit au siècle d’or espagnol* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2010), 37–70.

17 Peter Jessen, ed., *Meister der Schreibkunst aus drei Jahrhunderten* (Stuttgart: J. Hoffmann, 1923); Claude Mediavilla, *Calligraphy: From Calligraphy to Abstract Painting* (Wommelgem: Scirpus, 1996).

excellence; their great virtuosos were lifting the Low Countries to new heights.¹⁸

Nonetheless, despite the difficulty of distinguishing oneself amid this proliferation of talented writing masters, Baldericus van Horicke attained a preeminent position due to his command of symmetry and ingenious ornamental composition, and for his extraordinary mastery in “the sallies of the pen” and the fusion of calligraphic pen-strokes and illustration, of text and “writing as illustration.” His oeuvre is defined by the exceptional use of the calligraphic stroke and the mastery of the defining elements of writing (pressure, angle, modulation, ductus, height, width, rhythm, etc.), transcending the merely textual and creating fanciful iconic forms that are full of Baroque flourishes that become perfectly recognizable iconic units.¹⁹ Sixteenth-century calligraphers in general, and Van Horicke in particular, underlined the symbiosis between writing and illustration, opening up a fertile dialectic between legibility and expressiveness that still fuels debates about calligraphy today.








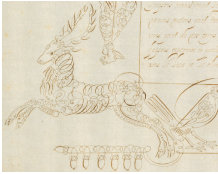


A comparison of the zoomorphic figures and calligraphic flourishes found in the Cuaderno Español with many other specimens dating to this first half of the seventeenth century helps establish the authorship of the newly discovered manuscript. Stylistic elements, the morphology of the letter forms, and the particularities of the calligraphed animals can all be tied to a single pen and author. Conclusive confirmation that the folios in question were handwritten originals by Van Horicke came from a comparison of the unpublished manuscript with exemplars conserved at the Newberry Library in Chicago and at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich (table 1).

Likewise, Laurent Guillo’s studies of the “corpus Horicke” were fundamental in establishing the calligraphic style and corroborating the authorship

18 La Fontaine Verwey, “The Golden Age of Dutch Calligraphy,” 69–78.

19 Michael Roth, “Johann Neudörffer der Ältere und der Beruf des Schreibmeisters,” in *Schrift als Bild*, ed. Michael Roth [from the exhibition ‘Schrift als Bild,’ at Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kulturforum, 29 October 2010–23 January 2011] (Petersberg: Michael Imhof, 2010), 9–11.

TABLE 1. Comparison of calligraphic animals.

<i>Unpublished original copybook</i> (ca. 1616). Private collection (Madrid).	<i>Livre contenant plusieurs</i> <i>sortes d'ecritures avecq divers</i> <i>traicts, faict inventé et mis en</i> <i>lumiere par Baldri van</i> <i>Horicke, [. . .] Year: 1633.</i> Newberry VAULT Wing MS ZW 6465 .H781	<i>Horicke, Baldericus van den:</i> <i>Schreibmeisterbuch für Herzog</i> <i>Wolfgang Wilhelm von Pfalz-</i> <i>Neuburg</i> —BSB Cod.icon. 466
		
Fol. 1r: Bird	Fol. 17r: Bird	Fol. 23v, number 52: Bird
		
Fol. 2r: Dog	Fol. 23r: Dog	
		
Fol. 3r: Stag	Fol. 12r: Stag	Fol. 11v, number 28: Stag
		
Fol. 4r: Duck	Fol. 6r: Duck	



Fol. 5r: Camel



Fol. 25r: Camel



Fol. 22r: Camel



Fol. 6r: Horse



Fol. 5v: Horse



Fol. 29v, number 64: Horse



Fol. 7r: Duck (2)



Fol. 19v, number 45: Duck and bird

of Van Horicke in the unpublished copybook.²⁰ This corpus is a set of seventeen manuscripts containing 363 musical pieces, calligraphed portraits, and “airs de cour” that are currently conserved in libraries such as the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels, the Muziek Instituut in The Hague, the British Library in London, the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, and the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel.²¹ A few years ago, a “Dessin caligraphique sur peau de vélin accompagné du texte et de la partition d’une chanson, vers 1640, feuille de 30 × 40 cm” also came to light among the collections offered for sale at the Librairie du Manoir de Pron in Montigny sur Canne, France. A recent contribution by Wouter Bracke, focused on Horicke’s

20 Guillo, “État des recherches sur le Corpus Horicke,” 125–33.

21 Guillo, “De la gravure au trait de plume,” 349–72.

Newberry Library Wing MS ZW 6465 .H782 is the most recent study dedicated to the calligrapher.²²

The Cuaderno Español: A Characterization

The opening title written in pencil on the Cuaderno Español—"Schreibmeisterbuch"—suggests a semantic field appropriate for grouping these singular calligraphic results: *Musterbuch*, *Schönschriften*, *Arts d'écriture*, *Schriftkunsbücher*, *Schreibkunst*, *Schönsreiben*, *Zierliche Schöne Schriften*, *Modus/Formal*, *Ars Scribendi*, *Spiegel der Schriftkunst*, and so on are all terms that can be used to describe this genre of object.²³ Ana Martínez Pereira also provided interesting denominations for encompassing a broad set of materials, both handwritten and printed, characterized by their eminently calligraphic content grouped under the generic title of "writing arts": Manual, Art, Treatise, Book, Tables, School (Universal), Method, Orthography, Instruction, and Treasure, to which we could also add Compilation, Pattern Book, Alphabet, Letter Type, and more.²⁴

22 Wouter Bracke, "Erycius Puteanus' Elogia Project, Balduinus Horickius and Chicago, Newberry Library, Wing MS ZW 6465 .H782," *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 69, no. 1–2 (2020): 139–69.

23 Anthony R. A. Croiset van Uchelen, "Schreibmeisterbücher," *Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens Online* (2017), available at https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004337862_COM_190700; Oliver Linke and Christine Sauer, *Zierlich schreiben: Der Schreibmeister Johann Neudörffer d.Ä. und seine Nachfolger in Nürnberg* (Nuremberg: Stadtbibliothek, 2007); Roth, "Johann Neudörffer der Ältere und der Beruf des Schreibmeisters," 9–11.

24 Ana Martínez Pereira, "Los manuales de escritura de los Siglos de Oro: Problemas bibliográficos," *Litterae: Cuadernos sobre cultura escrita*, no. 3–4 (2003–4): 133–59; Ana Martínez Pereira and Emilio Torné, "Arte subtilissima, 1550: Teoría y práctica de la escritura en la edición más perfecta de la obra de Juan de Iciar," in *Arte sutilísima, por la cual se enseña a escribir perfectamente*, ed. Fermín de los Reyes (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 2007), 35–64; Ana Martínez Pereira, "El arte de escribir de Alonso Martín del Canto (1544)," in *La Memoria de los libros: Estudios sobre la historia del escrito y de la lectura en Europa y América*, vol. 1, ed. Pedro Cátedra and María Luisa López Vidriero (Salamanca: Instituto de Historia del Libro y de la Lectura, 2004), 201–14.

One enormously important aspect in establishing a classification of these calligraphic specimens from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries is the set of characteristics that define their constituent materiality. This is consistent with the ideas of Antonio Castillo, who singles out the importance of the materiality of written objects in identifying their morphology or the material form in which they were actually and effectively constructed.²⁵ The writing medium used, the formats (generally landscape—or Italian style—for better use of space and aesthetic projection of the calligraphic result), the intentionality or purpose of the same, the preparation of the writing boxes in complicated exercises of spatial measurement, pencil, or dry point guidelines, and the resulting visual balance all fully immerse us in the preparatory phases of these exemplars, clearly intended as demonstrative showpieces.²⁶

Despite the long list of calligraphy masters who have punctuated the history of the art of writing across Europe since the sixteenth century, the large number of practically unknown authors whose names have hardly left a few lines in prosopographical reference works is surprising.²⁷ Biobibliographies of Spanish calligraphers, like those of Cotarelo, Rico, and Martínez Pereira, join the reference works listing treatises and calligraphic works in Germany, France, Holland, or Italy.²⁸

25 Antonio Castillo Gómez, “El tiempo de la cultura escrita: A modo de introducción,” in *Historia de la cultura escrita: Del Próximo Oriente Antiguo a la sociedad informatizada*, ed. Antonio Castillo (Gijón: Trea, 2002), 20; Roger Chartier and Jean Hébrard, “Prólogo: Morfología e historia de la cultura escrita,” in *Alfabetismo, escritura y sociedad*, ed. Armando Petrucci (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2020), 12. Patricia Carmassi, “Welche Materialität?,” in *Codex und Material*, ed. Patrizia Carmassi and Gia Toussaint (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018), 12–38.

26 Aurora Egido, “Los manuales de escribientes desde el Siglo de Oro: Apuntes para la teoría de la escritura,” *Bulletin Hispanique* 97, no. 1 (1995): 67–94.

27 The exhibition entitled *Caligrafía española: El arte de escribir*, held from September 2015 to early 2016 in the Biblioteca Nacional de España, is a reminder of this calligraphic fever that has recently developed.

28 Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, *Diccionario biográfico y bibliográfico de calígrafos españoles* (Madrid: Tipografía de la Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos, 1916) [Ed. facs. Madrid: Visor, 2004]; Manuel Rico y Sinobas, *Diccionario de calígrafos españoles* (Madrid: Sucesores de Jaime Ratés, 1903); Ana Martínez Pereira, *Manuales de escritura de los Siglos de Oro: Repertorio crítico*

The Cuaderno Español cannot be separated from its courtly context of production, use, and circulation. Whether it was a set of samples intended as a gift or, more plausibly, the result of well-executed calligraphy exercises intended to serve as a model for learning to read and write in an atmosphere of high culture, such as that of the Brussels court, these folios must also be situated within a series of practices (“possessing, giving away, exchanging, stealing”) that define elite manuscript circulation in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe.²⁹ There is no doubt that the item formed part of the strategies of courtly sociability at the heart of which was a strong presence of writing, as noted by Pedro Cardim. The selection of moralistic phrases drawn from the *Floresta de Santa Cruz* as a “panoplia de exempla” repeatedly calligraphed by Van Horicke would moreover fit in with what Cardim characterizes as the “rules of palace life established by numerous texts, both printed and handwritten, which compiled precepts relative to

y analítico de obras manuscritas e impresas (Mérida: Editora Regional de Extremadura, 2006); Axel Erdmann, Alberto Govi, and Fabrizio Govi, “Ars Epistolica: Communication in Sixteenth Century Western Europe: Epistolaries, Letter Writing Manuals and Model Letter Books, 1501–1600,” *European History Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (2015): 549–51, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265691415587683h>; Ángel Gutiérrez Cabero, “La enseñanza de la caligrafía en España a través de los artes de escribir de los siglos XVI al XX: La construcción de un estilo de escritura” (PhD diss., Complutense University of Madrid, 2015), available at <https://eprints.ucm.es/29371/>; Claude Mediavilla, *Histoire de la calligraphie française* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2006); La Fontaine Verwey, “The Golden Age of Dutch Calligraphy”; Werner Doede, *Bibliographie deutscher Schreibmeisterbücher von Neudörffer bis 1800* (Hamburg: Ernst Hauswedell, 1958); Stanley Morison, *Calligraphy, 1535–1885: A Selection of Seventy-two Writing Books and Specimens from the Italian, French, Low Countries and Spanish Schools catalogued and described* (Milan: La Bibliofila, 1962); A. F. Johnson, *Bibliography of Italian Writing-Books of the XVI Century*, [s.d.] (1950); Claudio Bonacini, *Bibliografia delle Arti Scrittorie e della Caligrafia* (Florence: Sansoni Antiquariato, 1953); Carla C. Marzoli, *Calligraphy, 1535–1885: A Collection of Seventy-two Writing-books and Specimens from the Italian, French, Low Countries and Spanish schools, catalogued and described* (Milan: La Bibliofilia, 1962); David P. Becker, *The Practice of Letters: The Hofer Collection of Writing Manuals, 1514–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard College Library, 1997); Anthony R. A. Croiset van Uchelen, *Nederlandse Schrijfmeesters uit de eventiente eeuw: Tentoonstelling 16 Juni tot en Met 19 Augustus 1978* (The Hague: Rijksmuseum Meermanno-Westreenianum, 1978).

29 Bouza Álvarez, *Corre manuscrito*, 47.

the behaviour one must adopt to be successful at court.”³⁰ Nonetheless, with the passage of time, such values tended to overlap with the so-called reformulated uses of the manuscripts or successive reactivations of the document, to use the terminology proposed by Eric Ketelaar: from school copybook to collectors’ item, ultimately becoming a valued historical source for the study of courtly writing culture.³¹

The Cuaderno Español thus contributes to the calligraphic testimonies of early modern Europe that, under the guise of pattern books or letter arts, provided extremely interesting exemplars on which to focus for the purpose of imitating writing models and spurring the advancement of both writing practice and later typographic inspiration, especially in the rich Dutch graphic panorama of the long seventeenth century.³² Eberhard König, in his preliminary study of the calligraphy books of Mary of Burgundy, contextualizes one of the fundamental questions that surround these types of exemplar: with what intentionality were they produced? What were they exactly—books for learning to write, exemplaria, embellishments of moral readings, a “Schreibmeisterbuch,” or an alphabet book? In short: a book for learning to read, or a book for learning to write (*Lesenlernen / Schreibenlernen*)?³³

In our opinion, such items were mixed artifacts. Whereas the basic rules for writing were accessible via other types of texts (actual manuals or academic rule-books, like the *Schulmeisterbuch* by von Zirn, in which rules or principles for teaching ductus and a series of practical instructions appear), calligraphic works could also furnish pious or edifying texts for the

30 Pedro Cardim, “La presencia de la escritura (siglos XVI–XVIII),” in *Historia de la cultura escrita: Del Próximo Oriente Antiguo a la sociedad informatizada*, ed. Antonio Castillo (Gijón: Trea, 2002), 288.

31 Eric Ketelaar, “Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives,” *Archival Science* 1, no. 2 (2001): 131–41, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02435644>.

32 Mathieu Lommen, “Lettering in the ‘Age of Ugliness’: Nineteenth-Century Dutch Lettering Model Books,” *Quaerendo* 46, no. 1 (2016): 20–52, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700690-12341342>.

33 Eberhard König, ed., *Das Kalligraphiebuch der Maria von Burgund: Ein Kalligraphiebuch mit feinsten Federzeichnungen: Handschrift II 845 der Bibliothèque royale de Belgique in Brüssel* (Lucerne: Quaternio, 2015).

construction of a professional and moral *cursus bonorum*.³⁴ Through these materials, writing masters and calligraphers with access to the highest echelons of the court could position themselves near the circles of political decision-making, often practicing their administrative competence as secretaries, scribes, or instructors alongside other more elegant commissions. In the latter case, embellished writing went beyond mere functionality to take its place alongside other works of art produced by painters, sculptors, jewelers, engravers, and others, echoing an all-encompassing appetite for refined art on the part of the members of the target audience: the political and economic elite.

Marc Smith has pointed out that printed calligraphy books are both manuals and hybrid products: on the one hand, they are printed, but on the other, they group together examples and samples for calligraphic imitation by potential students and experts.³⁵ In the French sphere, work by Jean Hébrard and Christine Métayer has yielded interesting examples of exemplary writings, which served for the formalization of methods and modes of calligraphic learning; they have shown that many of these items were destined for modern printing presses.³⁶ This imitative practice, based upon the original, has been also studied in the case of Spanish calligraphic manuals and their marginal writing exercises, which provide evidence of use.³⁷

34 Peter von Zirn, *Schulmeisterbuch*, Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Ms. Cod. Guelf. 535.16.

35 Marc Smith, "About Calligraphy Books," *The Newberry*, <https://paleography.library.utoronto.ca/content/about-calligraphy-books>.

36 Jean Hébrard, "Des écritures exemplaires: L'art du maître écrivain en France du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée* 107, no. 2 (1995): 473–523; Christine Métayer, "De l'école au palais de justice: L'itinéraire singulier des maîtres écrivains de Paris (XVIe–XVIIIe siècles)," *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 45, no. 5 (1990): 1217–37, <https://doi.org/10.3406/ahess.1990.278899>; Christine Métayer, "Normes graphiques et pratiques de l'écriture: Maîtres écrivains et écrivains publics à Paris aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles," *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 56, no. 4 (2001): 881–901, <https://doi.org/10.3406/ahess.2001.279992>; James M. Wells, "The Bureau Académique d'Écriture: A Footnote to the History of French Calligraphy," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 51, no. 3 (1957): 203–16.

37 Diego Navarro Bonilla and Cristina Muñoz Vela, "Libros de letras y letras en el libro: Anotaciones caligráficas en manuales y artes de escritura (siglos XVI–XVIII)," *Investigación*

Van Horicke's *Cuaderno Español* participates in this courtly environment and represents a pedagogical tool made available to the youngest members of the court in Brussels. In summary, it serves as a witness of the meticulous courtly educational initiatives promoted by Philip II's daughter and son-in-law. It is not an isolated item but rather, like the two handwritten books of calligraphic examples conserved in Chicago and Munich, another component of a full program of childhood education and learning. However, with regard to the process of learning to write, it is important to differentiate between the materials prepared following rules or instructive guidelines (manuals, treatises, and methods) and other forms of output focused on the final product, what we might call the calligraphic artifact. The latter would serve as the basis for imitation and emulation, or as a "mirror" for potential students and learners, a resource to be used in their daily lessons. The two clumsy and imitative calligraphy exercises executed in pencil on folios 1v and 7v (see fig. 2) suggest the direct and practical use of the blank spaces in the copybook for what might have been a school exercise that aimed to reproduce the original samples by Van Horicke. Nonetheless, this hypothesis, which would indicate that this particular copybook is an artifact of practical learning designed not only for the user to read but also to use for transcribing the results of calligraphy lessons—something that was very common in the blank spaces of other treatises, manuals, and books of writing exercises of the era—is quite hard to prove at this stage.

As a consequence, we cannot speak simply of a calligraphic piece of self-representation by the author produced to demonstrate his exceptional ability as a master scribe capable of executing different scripts for different uses and purposes in an up-to-date style. It was also not a technical manual, as no step-by-step instructions on ductus or replication are found in the book. It is, however, true that folio 1r includes a complete alphabet in the cursive writing style for the texts in Spanish, the only concession to anything reminiscent of a didactic resource useful for distinguishing individual letters in isolation.



FIGURE 2. Writing tests done in pencil in the blank spaces of the Cuaderno Español: fols. 1v–2r (top) showing an imitative flourished initial A; fol. 7v (middle) showing an initial D; and fol. 1r (bottom) showing the model used on fol. 7v.

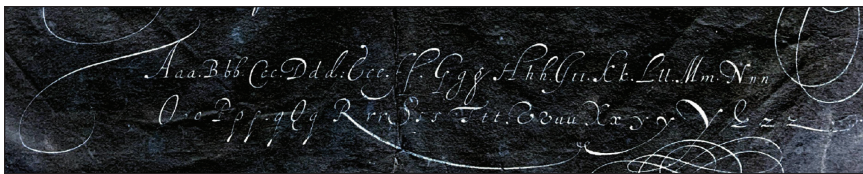


FIGURE 3. Fol.1r: Complete alphabet.

What the *Cuaderno Español* shows is a set of eight examples that students could learn to read, passages that are produced with painstaking calligraphic grace. They were not samples intended to be used for the direct reproduction of the calligraphic excellence and virtuosity displayed by Van Horicke, something that would be difficult to achieve for children under the age of fifteen. Rather, they should be considered as a graphic resource that enabled the teachings of the *Floresta de Santa Cruz* or those of the five edifying texts in French to be learned through the act of copying sublime calligraphy. This purpose suggests a subordination of the calligraphic apparatus to the content of the instructive and moralistic texts, and not the other way around.

Returning to the excellent penmanship and hybridization that define these calligraphic materials, we can see that Van Horicke was a master of that which Nadine Rottau has called “Hybride Medien,” that is, the successful combination of writing and illustration in which, little by little, we glimpse an emancipation from the legibility of the letters (legible units), in favor of the composition of meaningful forms of maximum expressiveness (suggestive images) produced by the flourish of the stroke.³⁸ Van Horicke clearly reached the apex of ornamental calligraphic acrobatics, combining the ethos of the *Vive la Plume* motto used by the members of the guild of writing masters and visible on the first folio of one of his manuscripts with that of the magisterial *Penna volans*. The discovery examined here fulfils both of these maxims amply.

38 Nadine Rottau, “Hybride Medien: Mikrographien und Federzüge,” in *Schrift als Bild*, ed. Michael Roth (Petersberg: Michael Imhof, 2010), 158–70.

Conclusions

The material analysis of the *Cuaderno Español* and its comparison with other samples of the author's work leads us to conclude that this manuscript hails from the virtuoso pen of Van Horicke. Likewise, the identification of the watermarks enabled us to date the manuscript to 1616, in Brussels, although it was an owner of German origin in the nineteenth century who joined these eight leaves together in a copybook, the form in which it has been conserved to this day. Nonetheless, this particular copybook employs a type of paper whose watermark does not match that of the manuscript conserved at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich nor that of the one from the Newberry Library in Chicago.

The so-called golden age of calligraphy in the Low Countries cannot be discussed without reference to the technical contribution of Baldericus Van Horicke at the court of the archdukes of Austria in Brussels. Though only a small number of autograph manuscripts survive, this scarcity is compensated by the excellent quality of the extant work. Our study of the *Cuaderno Español* and other manuscripts of Van Horicke shows that the calligrapher was able to integrate diverse handwriting morphologies derived from Fraktur hands as well as Italian and elegant Flemish cursives. In doing so he demonstrated an interest in the most innovative calligraphic fashions of the time.

Compared to other Van Horicke copybooks, this *cuaderno*, ultimately bound in the nineteenth century, is less luxurious and rather short, which suggests that in its current state it might be incomplete. As we have seen, the texts in Spanish are taken from the *Floresta de Santa Cruz*, a work that was often used as a moral and educational guide and for school exercises involving dictation and imitation. The texts are copied in a humanistic cursive hand, while the texts in French are written in Flemish Courant and French Letter, with clear separation between the letterforms. Undated interventions are visible in pencil, likely produced for the purpose of imitating the originals. There are also guidelines, which would reinforce the didactic value and scholarly usefulness of the eight calligraphed folios.

Appendix 1: Bibliographic Description

Madrid, Private collection, copybook with eight calligraphy exercises by Baldericus van Horicke [*Schreibmeisterbuch*], ca. 1616, 2 flyleaves and 9 folios, 315 × 174 mm. Provenance: acquisition in 2019 by a Spanish private collector from the auction house Pierre Bergé & Associés of Paris and Brussels.

Copybook of eight folios on paper of calligraphy exercises accompanied by a final folio written in nineteenth-century French with the transcription of Van Horicke's calligraphed texts. The folios were originally part of another volume, as the lateral sewing marks suggest that they were previously bound and, once detached, joined together to create this copybook by means of a simple binding dating to the nineteenth century, which used marbled paper. Laid paper with two watermarks: fol. 7 (Watermark 1, seventeenth century; Briquet number 678; see fig. 4); fol. 9 (Watermark 2, nineteenth century; winged angel holding up a crest with the initials F.P.; see fig. 5) It is accompanied by a border with the inscription DVCHESNE. The watermark corresponds to number 678 of the Briquet repertory, and its origin has been traced to paper mills in the city of Brussels around 1616. The information has been compared to the data supplied in great detail by the Wasserzeichen Informationssystem (DFG).³⁹ No signatures or catchwords, but with subsequent foliation (nineteenth century) in the upper right corner of the recto.

Their state of conservation is quite good, with very few signs of significant damage. Dutch binding with brown fabric corners, marbled paper boards, and overcast stitching—that is, stitched by piercing the groups of sheets on the spine edge with a needle, a style that was used much later than the seventeenth century. Book label cut from paper on the front cover to include the handwritten title of the work, which was usual in nineteenth-century bindings. No title. No ownership marks, seals, or ex libris. No bibliography or complementary studies except for the succinct description provided by the website of the auction house where the exemplar was acquired in 2019.

Notes on the Script

According to the script samples displayed in the well-known *Theatrum Artis Scribendi* (ed. 1594, 1614), three main morphologies of writing can be recognized in the Cuaderno Español, creating an association between the letter type and the language of the text reproduced: an Italian letter-form model inspired that used for Spanish texts, while the Flemish Courant and French Letter are both employed for French texts.

The early seventeenth century saw a fascinating process in which the influence of the Italian calligraphers responsible for elevating the humanistic *cancelleresca* letters in the previous century was progressively refined, consolidated, and altered. Giovanni Francesco Cresci's proposals for a new cancelleresca were shown in his treatise *Essempiare di piu sorti lettere* (Rome: Antonio Blado,

39 Wasserzeichen Informationssystem, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft: <https://www.wzma.at/>

1560). These and other scripts would later reach the Dutch provinces, eventually inspiring a Dutch cancelleresca that would be the origin of the elegant and highly recognizable “Krulletter” (curly letter) script.⁴⁰ Jodocus Hondius, but above all Jan van de Velde, the most well-known Dutch calligrapher at the time, produced notable examples of this “lettera italiana” script in his celebrated *Spiegel der Schrifkonste* (Rotterdam, 1605). Van Horicke, for his part, did not remain on the sidelines of writing fashions, perfectly cultivating diverse scripts in line with the tastes of the moment. Two centuries later, calligraphers like Torío de la Riva would continue pondering the transcendence of this script, called “Bastarda moderna itálica” and its variants (fig. 7).

40 Ramiro Espinoza and Rob Becker, *De Amsterdamse Krulletter: The Curly Letter of Amsterdam* (Eindhoven: Lecturis, 2015), 34–45.

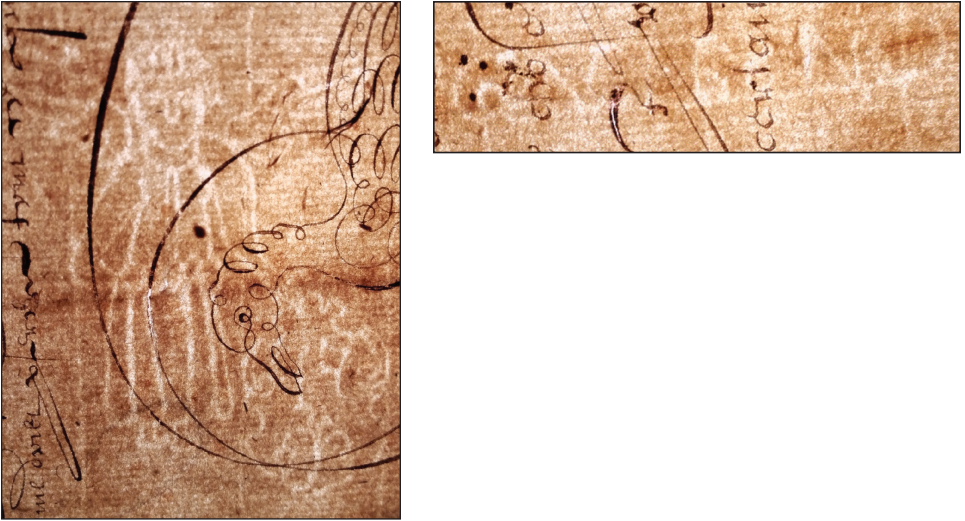


FIGURE 4. Watermarks (Briquet, no. 678, briquet-online.at) found on the paper used by Van Horicke in the Cuaderno Español. They are notably different from those of the BSB-Hs Cod.icon. 466 and from the Wing MS ZW 6465.H781 exemplar at the Newberry Library. The paper makes it possible to date the copybook to around 1616.

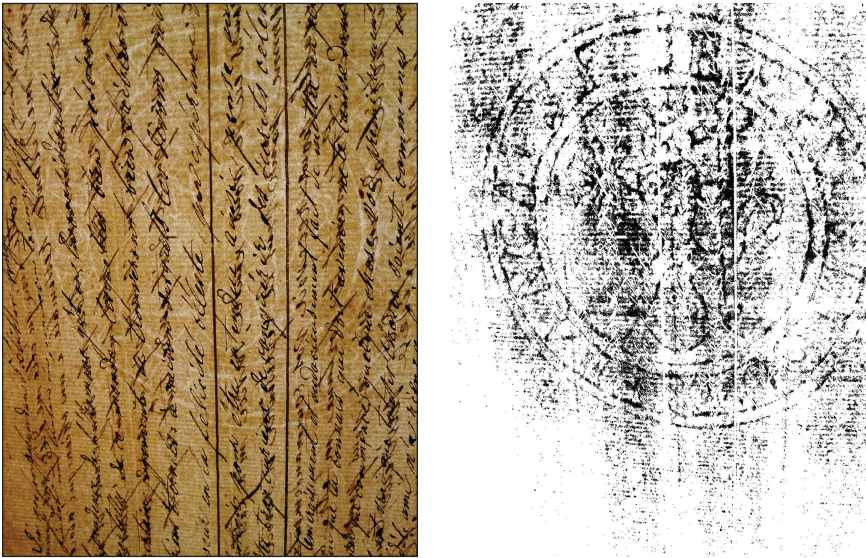


FIGURE 5. Final watermarks from the two last folios written in French and contemporaneous with the nineteenth-century binding.

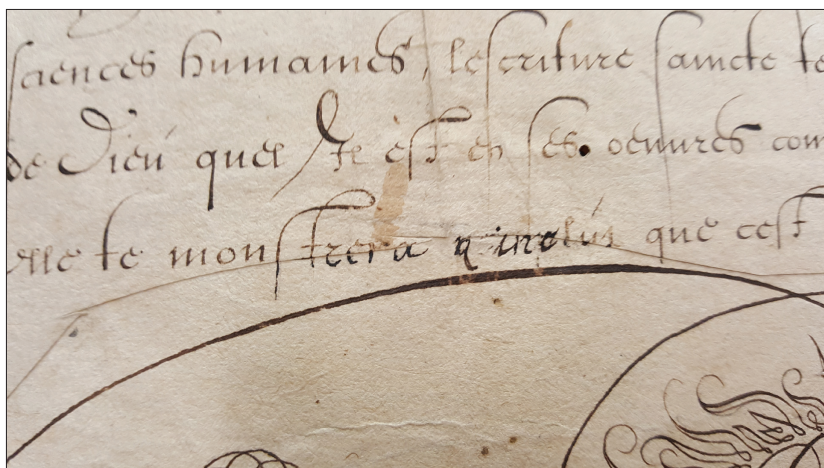


FIGURE 6. Fol. 6v: Oval with the calligraphed figure of the horse, cut out and glued, with later reconstruction of a fragment of mutilated text.

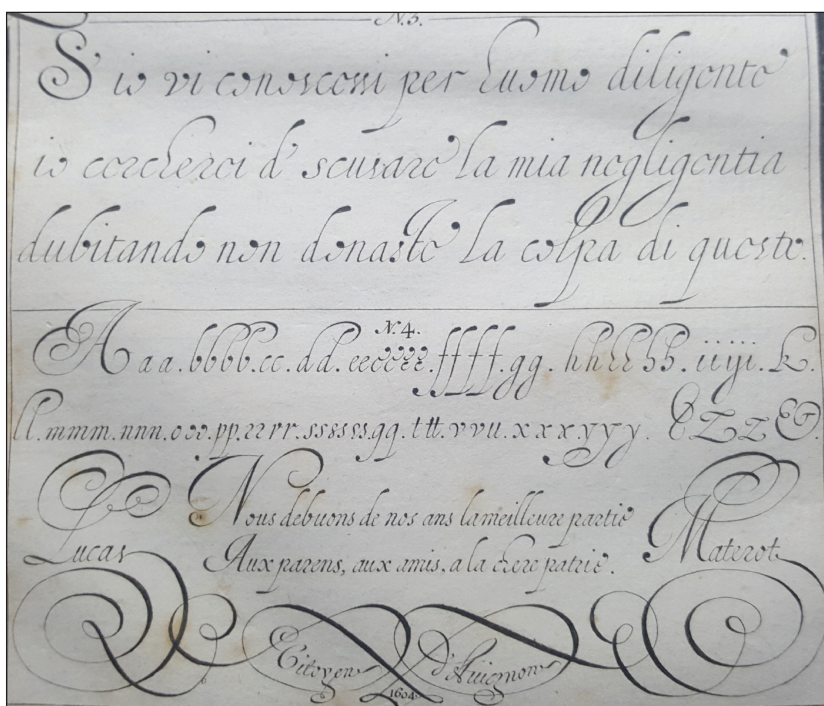


FIGURE 7. Example of “Moderna Itálica,” close to the old “Cancelleresca moderna” proposed by Cresci and others and developed in France by Lucas Materot and others. Cfr. Torquato Torío de la Riva y Herrero, *Arte de escribir por reglas* [...] (2nd ed.; Madrid 1802), 194. Private Collection.

Front cover

Front endpaper/ Schreibemeisterbuch | Belgien um 1620.

paste down (modern
annotation in pencil)

Paper flyleaf

Fol. 1r	Calligraphic sample number 1, with text by Melchor de Santa Cruz (1505–85) from his <i>Floresta española de apotegmas y sentencias, sabia y graciosamente dichas, de algunos españoles</i> (1574): “Don Alonso de Aguillar, viendo que sacavan a un muerto de su casa [. . .]”; bird at the top; alphabet at the bottom. ¹ Numbered later, probably in the same era (nineteenth century) as the French translations that appear at the end of the copybook.	Text in Spanish; Italian-inspired letter.
[Fol. 1v]	Calligraphy exercise in pencil of an upper-case A, probably contemporaneous with Horicke.	
Fol. 2r	Calligraphy sample number 2, again with text from Melchor de Santa Cruz, <i>Floresta española</i> [. . .] (1574): “Avía un hombre tan mísero que todo lo que mal le sucedía pensaba [. . .].” Dog calligraphed at the bottom. ²	Text in Spanish; Italian-inspired letter.
Fol. 2v	Blank.	
Fol. 3r	Calligraphy sample number 3, again with text from Melchor de Santa Cruz, <i>Floresta Española</i> [. . .] (1574): “Comprando un escudero unas cargas de lleña [<i>sic</i>] de un labrador dávale a real por la carga [. . .].” Stag calligraphed at the bottom.	Text in Spanish; Italian-inspired letter.
Fol. 3v	Blank.	
Fol. 4r	Calligraphy sample number 4, French text 1: « La prudence de l’homme [. . .].” Duck calligraphed at the bottom.	Text in French; “Courante Flamande” letter.
Fol. 4v	Blank.	
Fol. 5r	Calligraphy sample number 5, French text 2: “C’est temerairement [. . .].” Camel calligraphed at the bottom.	Text in French; “Françoisse” letter.
Fol. 5v	Blank.	
Fol. 6r	Calligraphy sample number 6, French text 3: “Adonne toi [. . .].” Horse calligraphed at the bottom.	Text in French; “Françoisse” letter.
Fol. 6v	Blank (glued-on oval with horse).	

Fol. 7r	Calligraphy sample number 7, French text 4: “Baille un frein à ta langue [. . .].” Duck calligraphed at the bottom.	Text in French; “Courante Flamande” letter.
Fol. 7v	Calligraphy exercise in pencil of an upper-case D using the initial D of fol. 1r as a reference.	
Fol. 8r	Calligraphy sample number 8, French text 5: “Le désir que j’ai toujours [. . .].” Nonfigurative flourishing exercises.	Text in French; “Françoisse” letter.
Fol. 8v	Blank.	
[Fols. 9r–v]	<p>Transcriptions of the five texts calligraphed only in French. They are headed by a two-line introduction in German script from the nineteenth century:</p> <p>Introduction in German: “Die vorher gefunden[en] 5 Blätter tragen eine so alte Orthographie wie man es für eine im 15. Jahrhundert findet und bedeutet . . . in unserem Französisch wie folgt:”</p> <p>French text 1: “La prudence de l’homme [. . .]”</p> <p>French text 2: “C’est temerairement [. . .]”</p> <p>French text 3: “Adonne toi [. . .]”</p> <p>French text 4: “Baille un frein à ta langue [. . .]”</p> <p>French text 5: “Le désir que j’ai toujours [. . .]”</p>	
Paper flyleaf		
Back endpaper/paste down (modern annotation in pencil)	06/2104/MTod?	
Back cover		

1. This same fragment headed with “Don Alonso de Aguillar [. . .]” appears again in the exemplar at the Newberry Library, VAULT Wing MS ZW 6465 .H781, FP_208_092.

2. The custom of Dutch calligraphers of copying fragments of Spanish works appears to have been common. We see this not only in the case of Van Horicke but also in that of Van de Velde, who executed a magnificent calligraphy exercise in 1605 in Rotterdam with a series of phrases corresponding to the *Floresta española* by Melchor de Santa Cruz (1505–85), as in the case of our calligrapher. See Jessen, *Meister der Schreibkunst aus drei Jahrhunderten*, no. 122.

Appendix 2: Reproduction of the Cuaderno Español



FIGURE 8. Front cover.



FIGURE 9. Fol. 1r.

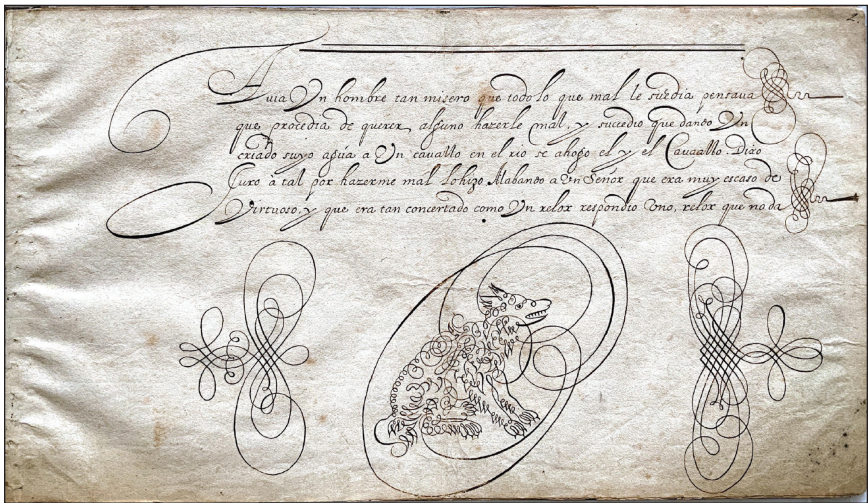


FIGURE 10. Fol. 2r.



FIGURE 11. Fol. 3r.



FIGURE 12. Fol. 4r.



FIGURE 13. Fol. 5r.

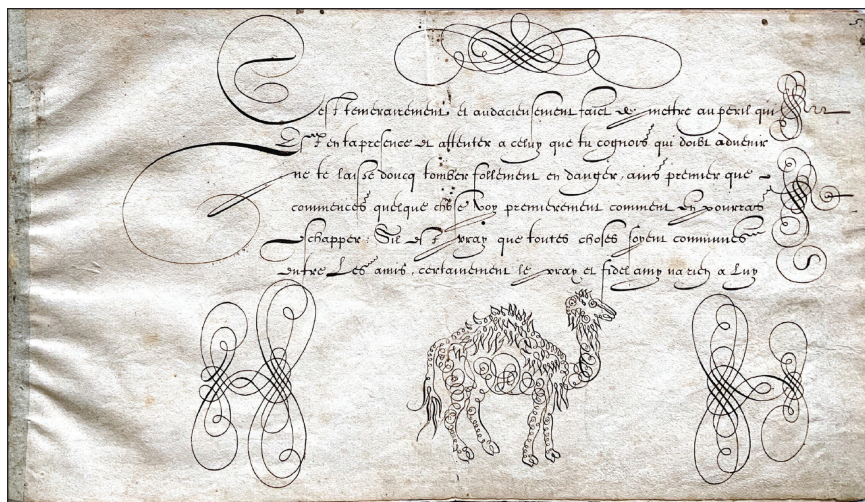


FIGURE 14. Fol. 6r.



FIGURE 15. Fol. 7r.

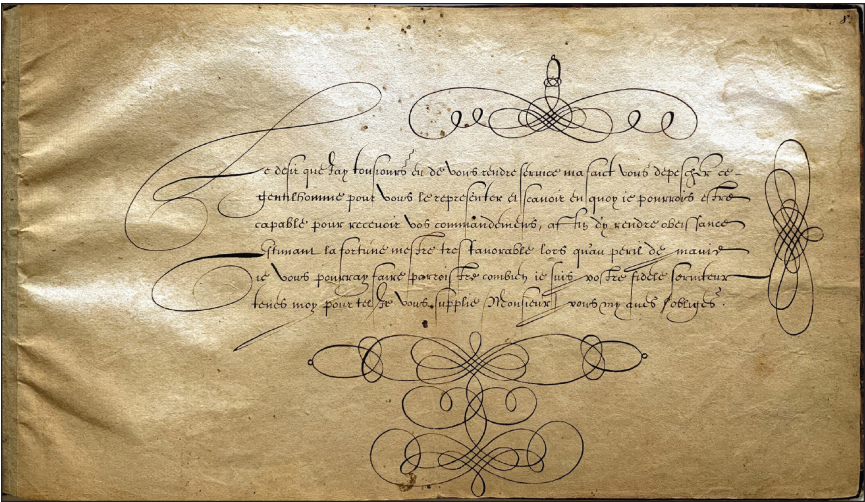


FIGURE 16. Fol. 8r.

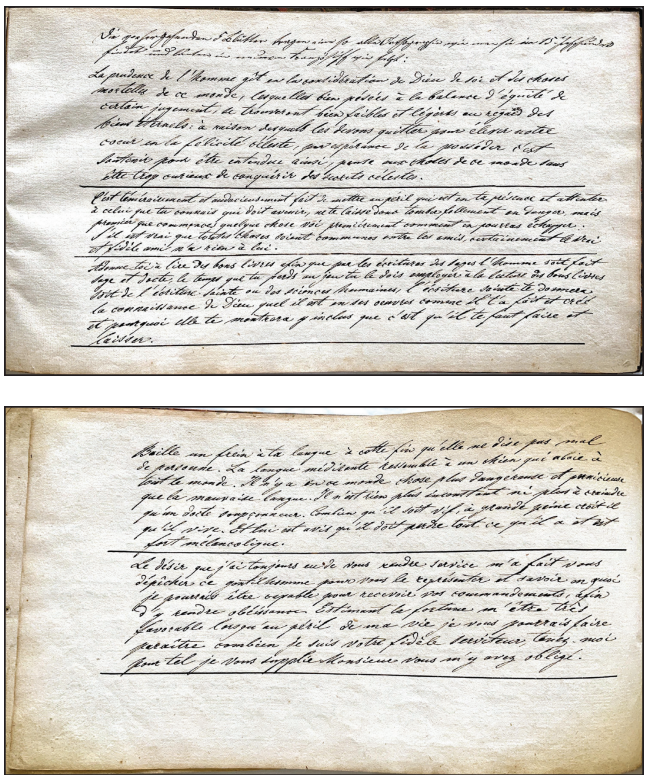


FIGURE 17. Fols. 9r-v. Transcriptions of the five French texts.



FIGURE 18. Back cover.