

**Ludovico Vicentino
degli Arrighi**

Opera

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OPERINA

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A OPERI
NA
di Ludouico Vicentino, da
imparare' di
Scrivere
Re'
littera fan=
cellaref=
cha

Ludovico Vicentino's Operina, which teaches the writing of chancery script.

IL MODO
 &
 Regola de' scriuere littera
 corsua
 ouer cancellarescha
 nouamente composto per
 LUDOVICO
 VICENTINO
 NO
 Scrittore de' breui
 aplici
 in Roma nel Anno di nra
 salute
 + M D X X I I +

A

The method and rules for writing cursive letters or chancery script, recently put together by Ludovico Vicentino, writer of apostolic letters in Rome, in the year of our salvation 1522.

>> as I could and, if they do not match it at every point, ask you to forgive me, as the press cannot entirely represent the living hand; still I hope that by following my instruction you will reach your goal. Enjoy life and health.

~: Al benigno Lettore:~
 Pregato più uolte, anzi constretto da molti amici
 benignissimo Lettore, che riguardo hauendo al-
 la publica utilità e comodo non solamente di
 questa età, ma delli posterì anchora, uoleſſi
 dar qualche essemplio di scriuere, et regulata-
 mente formare gli caratteri e note delle lre
 che cancellaresche hoggi di chiamano) uolétier
 pigliai questa fatica: E perche impossibile era
 de mia mano porger tanti essempli, che sodisfa-
 cessino a tutti, mi sono ingegnato di ritrouare
 questa nuoua inuentione de lre, e metterle in
 stampa, se quali tanto se auicinano alle scrit-
 te a mano, quanto capeua il mio ingegno, E se
 puntualmente in tutto nò te rispondono, sup-
 plicoti che mi facci iscusato, Conciosia che la
 stampa nò possa in tutto ripresentarte la vi-
 ua mano, Spero nondimeno che imitando tu
 il mio ricordo, da te stesso potrai conseguire il
 tuo desiderio. Vini, e Sta Sano:~

Dear reader. As many friends have asked, indeed demanded, my dear reader, that I, for the public good, not only of our time but for posterity as well, provide some examples of writing and instruction about the regular shaping of letters that now-days are called chancery style, I have gladly undertaken this task; and as I couldn't provide enough examples by my own hand to satisfy all, I exerted myself with this new invention of letters and printed them, copying handwriting as closely >> 2

L chiunque uole' imparare' scriuere' lra
corsina, o sia cancellaresca comuene'
osservare' la sottoscritta norma

*P*rimieramente' imparerai di fare' que-
sti dui tratti, cioe - '
da li quali se' principiano tutte'
le

littere cancellare-
sche,

Deli quali dui tratti l'uno e' piano et
grosso,
l'altro e' acuto et sotti
le

come' qui tu puoi uedere' notato
- ' - ' - ' - ' -

Anyone who wishes to learn the cursive or chancery style should observe the rules that follow. First learn to make these two strokes - ' one of which begins all chancery letters. Of these two one is flat and thick, the other slanting and thin, as you see here: - ' - ' - ' -

Dal
primo adunqz
Tratto piano et gros-
so cioe' - - - che' alla riuersa
& tornando per il medesimo se' incom-
mincia,
principiarai tutte' le' infra scritte' littere'
- a b c d f g h k l o q s x

*L*o resto poi delo Alphabeto se' principia
dalo

Secundo Tratto acuto
e' sottile' con il taglio dela penna ascen-
dendo et poi
allo ingui

Ritornando in questo modo designato
' e e' i m n p r t u i j -

With the first stroke, flat and bold - - -, reversed and turned on itself, begin these letters: a b c d f g h k l o q s x y z. The remainder of the alphabet starts with the second stroke, slanting and thin, written upwards at the angle of the pen and then down, this way: ' e e' i m n p r t u i j -

Farai dal primo tratto grosso & pia-
 no questo corpo o - r o dal
 quale ne cavi poi cinque lettere
 a d c g q
 Dele quali lre tutti li corpi che toca-
 no la linea sopra
 la quale tu scri
 uerai,
 se hanno
 da
 formare
 in
 vno quadreto oblongo
 et
 non quadro perfetto in tal modo
 cioe □ :: r. e. a. v. c. d g :: q □
 a d c g q

From the first stroke, bold and short, make this lettershape o - r o on which these five letters, a d c g q, are based. The bodies of the letters, which sit on the baseline, should fit a condensed rectangle, not a perfect square, thus: □ :: r. e. a. v. c. d g :: q □ a d c g q

Mira le retro=
 scritte cinque lettere a c d g q
 ti fo intendere
 che anchora quasi tutte le altre lre
 se hanno á formare in questo :: qua-
 dretto oblungo et non quadro per-
 fetto □
 perche alocchio mio la littera
 corsua ouero cancellarescha
 vuole hauere
 del
 lungo & non del rotondo: che rotonda
 ti veneria fatta qua-
 do dal quadro
 perfetto
 & non oblungo la formasti

Note that in addition to the five letters a c d g q that I mentioned nearly all the others should be based on this condensed rectangle ::, not a perfect square, thus: □. In my view the cursive, or chancery, style should be condensed rather than round: and round it would look if it were based on a square and not the condensed rectangle.

P seguire poi l'ordine de' l'Alphabeto im=
parerai di fare questa linea l' principia=
dola con lo primo tratto grosso et piano

“?”

dala quale ne cauerai le littere in=
frascritte

b d ff f h k l s ss ff l b ll lb sl

& per fare che habbiano la ragione sua
li farai incima quella te

stolina un poco piu grosseta che la linea,

La qual grosseza tu facil=
mente farai

Se facendo il primo tratto lo comen=
ci alla riuersa, & dapo

ritorni indrieto per

lo medesimo

“?” b d f f f h k l l l l h b s s l l “

“?”

“?”

Quando harai impa=
rato

di fare le

tre antescritte, quali tutte comin=
ciano da quel primo tratto grosso e
piano chio t'ho detto, te ne ve=
nerai ad quelle

che

con il secundo tratto acuto et sotti=
le se debbono principiare, come

seguendo in que=
sto mio

Trattatello facilmente potrai

da te

stesso

Comprende=
re

B

As we go through the alphabet, you should learn to make this stem “?” which begins with the first flat and bold stroke “?”. It is used in the following letters: b d ff f h k l f ff ff l b ll lb fl and, to give them proper shape, make the top slightly thicker than the stem, which is easily done if the first stroke is reversed and then turned on itself:

“?” b d f f f h k l h b s s l l “

When you have learned to write the letters I mentioned, which all begin with the bold, short stroke, you come to the letters that begin with the second stroke, slanting and thin, as you will easily understand by following my little treatise.

Le lettere per tanto, quali dal Secundo trat-
to acuto & sottile se' princi-
piano, sonno le' infrascritte, Cioe'
' i e i j m n p r

t u

le' quali tutte deneno essere' equali, saluo
che' il p et il t hanno da essere' un
poco piu' altette' che' li corpi dele' altre'
tre

come' quiui con lo exem

pio Ti dimostro

a p a t m t u m p n o t u r p

Et questa piu' alteza del p cioe' dela linea
et non dela panza, a l'occhio mio af-
sai piu' satisface'. Del t poi, si fa p farlo
differente' da vno, c.

La perche' hauemo due' sorte' di s co-
me' uedi, & dela lunga te' ho insegnato,
Resta dire de' la piccola, dela qua-
le' farai che' l' uoltare'

di sotto sia

maggior' che' quello
di sopra

si come' qui vedi signato

s s s

Incominza dola pure' con lo primo tra-
to grosso e' piano chio

ti di si

Et ritornando per lo medesimo idietro
voltandolo al modo che' l' fia vno

s

che' sintenda

Beginning with the second stroke, slanting and thin, are the letters ' i e i j m n p r t u.

All should be the same height, except the p and t, which should be slightly higher than the bodies of the others, as I show in this example: a p a t m t u m p n o t u r p q r s t u m p u t i n a t m p i. Greater height of the p, the first stem, not the bowl, is in my view more pleasing; a taller letter t distinguishes it from the c.

As we have two kinds of the letter s, the s and the f, which you see here, and since I have already instructed you on the long, it now remains to discuss the short. Make the lower curve larger than the upper: s s s. Begin with the first stroke, flat and bold, which I mentioned before; reverse it back on its path and curve it in a way that makes a distinct s.

Auemo anchora du dire de lo x y z
de le quali Tre lre' lo x et y comincia=
no quasi ad uno modo

medesimo

cioe' ~ ~ cosi, tagliando nel mezo de lo
primo tratto per fare' lo x, et che dinaci
non sia piu largo che' quanto e' alto

vno a,

Lo simile' farai del y quanto a l'alteza,
in tal modo

xayaxayaxayaxy

de'

La z poi ti s'forzera di far=
la con questi tratti che qui sonno signati

~ ~ z z z
s z z
8

I still have not mentioned the letters x y z; of these three the x and y begin much the same way: [see the fifth line]. Cut the first stroke in the middle to make the x, which should not be wider in front than the letter a. The letter y should be made the same height, thus: x a y a x a y a x a y a x y. Strive to make the z with the strokes illustrated here [see the two bottom lines].

Te bisogna poi imparato
l'Alphabeto, per congiungere' le lre'
insieme' aduertire' che' tutte' le haste' sia=
no eguali, come' sonno b d h k l
con lo suo punteto icima
pendente' rotundo e grosso in modo del
principio de uno c l l

Similmente' le gambe' de sotto
siano pari a una
mesura

f g p q s x y ss
& che li corpi de' tutte' le littere' ua=
dino eguali cosi di sotto come' di sopra
in questo modo qui=
ui signato

A b c d e m f n g m h i k l m n o p q r s t u s t u m v x y z

Now that you have learned the letters of the alphabet, make sure when you put them together that all the [long] ascenders are of equal height: b d h k l, with the very top leaning to the right, rounded and bold, just as the beginning of the c or l. Likewise the descenders should be the same length: f g p q s x y ss, and the bodies of all the letters should be even, both at baseline and midline, as shown here: A a b c d e m f m g m h i k l m n o p q r s t u s t u m v x y z.

Et perche' de' tutte' le' littere' de' lo
 Alphabeto, alcune' se' fanno in uno
 tracto senza leuare
 la penna desopra la carta, alcune' in
 dui tracti
 Mi e' parso al proposito dirti, quali
 sono quelle' che' con vno, quali gl'
 le' che' con dui tracti se' facciano,
 Quelle' che' con vno
 tracto se' fanno,
 sono le' infra scrit-
 te. cioè
 a b c g h i l l m n o g r s s u y z
 Lo resto poi de' l'Alphabe-
 to
 se' fa in dui Tracti
 d e e' f k p t x &

As some letters of the alphabet are made in one stroke, without lifting pen from paper, and others in two, it appears timely to set out which letters are made in one stroke and which with two. Written in a single stroke are these: a b c g h i l l m n o q r s f u y z. The rest of the alphabet is written with two strokes: d e e' f k p t x &.

Saperai anchora Lettor mio che' dele'
 littere' piccole' delo Alphabeto,
 alcune' si panno ligare' con le' sue' segue-
 ti, et alcune' no: Quelle' che' si
 panno ligare' con le' sequenti, sono le'
 infra scritte, cioè, a c d f i k l m
 n s s t u
 Dele' quali a d i k l m n u si ligano
 con tutte' le' sequenti: Ma c f s s t li-
 gano sol con alcune': Lo resto poi delo
 Alphabeto cioè b e' e g h o p q r x y z
 non se' deue' ligar mai con l'ra
 sequente'. Ma nel liga-
 re, et non ligare' ti
 lascio in arbitrio
 tuo, purché la
 littera sia e-
 guale'.

You should also note, dear reader, that some small letters of the alphabet may be joined to the letter that follows and others must not. Those that can be joined to a succeeding letter are: a c d f u k l m n s f s t u. Of these, any letter can be joined from a d i k l m n u, but only some from c f f s. From the remaining letters of the alphabet, b e e' g h o p q r x y z, no letter that follows may be joined. But whether to join or not I leave to your judgment, as long as the writing is even.

Seguita lo eſſempio delle' lre' che pòno
ligarſi con tutte' le' ſue ſequenti, in tal mo-
do (ioe'

aa ab ac ad ae' af ag ah ai ak al am an

ao ap aq ar as af at au ax ay az

Il medeſmo farai con d i k l m n u.

Le ligature' poi de' c f s ſ t ſonno

le' infra =

ſcritte

ct, fa ff fi fm fn fo fr fu fy,

ſt ſt

ſf ſſ ſt, ta te' ti tm tn to tq tr tt tu

tx ty

Con le reſtanti' littere' de' lo Alphabeto, che'
ſòno, b e' g h o p q r x y z

non ſi deue' ligar mai lra

alcuna ſequenti'

Here follow examples of letters that can be joined to any succeeding letter: aa ab ac ad ae' af ag ah ai ak al am an ao ap aq ar as af at au ax ay az. Join from the letters d i k l m n u in the same way. The ligatures from the letters c f s ſ t are these: ct, fa ff fi fm fn fo fr fu fy, st, ſf ſſ ſt, ta te ti tm tn to tq tr tt tu tx ty. From the remaining letters of the alphabet, b e' g h o p q r x y z, there should be no joins.

Laccio che' nel ſcrimer tuo Tu habbi
piu facilità, farai che'

tutti li

caratteri, o uogli dire' littere'

pendano inanzi, ad

queſto modo

(ioe'

Virtus omnibus rebus antit profecto :-

Non uoglio però che' caſchino tanto Ma

coſi feci l'eſſempio, per

dimoſtrarti meglio la via doue' diſte'

littere'

hanno da ſtare'

pendenti.,

C

To write more fluently, let your characters—letters, if you prefer—lean forward:
“Virtue surpasses all else.” I do not want you to tilt them as much as that, but wrote
this example the better to demonstrate how proper letters should slope.

*I*ota, gratioſo Lettor mio, che' quātūqz
ti habbia diſto, che' tutti li
caractheri deueno eſſer pendenti inanzi,
voglio che' tu intendi queſto
quanto alle lre' piccole,

*V*oglio che' le tue Maiuſcule ſempre
ſiano tirate drite'

E
con li ſuoi tracti fermi e'
ſaldi ſenſa tremoli per dentro, che
alcramente, a mio parer

non
haueriano Gra-
tia
alcuna

Note that, dear reader, although I told you that the characters should all slant forward, I want you to understand that this only applies to the lower-case letters, and want your capitals always written upright in firm strokes and without wavering; otherwise they will not be the least attractive.

*F*arei che' la
diſtancia
da linea a linea de' coſe che' tu
ſcriuerai in tal littera

Cancellareſcia
non ſia troppo larga, ne' troppo ſtretta, ma
mediocre

*L*a diſtancia da parola a parola ſia
quanto e' vno n: Da littera ad
littera poi nel ligarle, ſia
quanto e' il biancho tra le' due gambe
de lo n

*S*ia perche' ſeria quaſi impoſſibile ſerua-
re queſta regola, te' ſforzarai di configliar-
ti con l'occhio, et a quello ſatiffare, il
quale ti ſcuſara boniſſi-
mo Compaſſo

Make the ſpace between lines of what you write in the chancery ſcript neither too large nor too ſmall, but average, and the gap between words the width of an n. The diſtance between joined letters ſhould be the ſame as between the ſtems of an n. But as this rule is almoſt impoſſible to follow, rely on your eyes: the beſt pair of dividers will abſolve you.

Credo assai á bastanza hauerti dimostrato
 il modo del mio scriuere' littera'
 Cancellarescha, quanto alle' lre' piccole':
 Hora ci resta da dirti p
 quanto alle' Maiuscu-
 le' si pertenga,
 le quali tutte' se' deueno principiare'
 da quelli dui tracti ch'io t'ho detto de
 le' piccole' (ioe' l'uno piano et grosso, l'al-
 tro acuto, e sottile'
 in
 tal
 modo
 - / - / - / -

I believe I have demonstrated enough of my method for writing the lower case of the chancery style; now the capitals remain, which all should begin with [one of] the two strokes that I spoke of when I dealt with the lower-case letters: one flat and thick, the other slanting and thin, thus: - / - / - / -

Graue' fatica non ti sia ad imparar fare' le'
 littere' Maiuscule', quando nelle' pic-
 cole' harai' firmato bene'
 la mano, et
 eo maxime' ch'io ti ho
 ditto che' li dui principij delle'
 Piccole' sonno anchora quelli delle' grandi
 come' continuando il scriuere', da te
 medesimo uenerai
 cognoscendo
 Non ti diro adunque' altro, Saluo che' te'
 Forzi' imparar fare' le' tue' Maiuscule'
 Come' qui apresso ri-
 trouerai per esse'
 pio designato

Learning the capitals will not be demanding when you have acquired a good, firm handwriting the lower case, not least because I have told you that the two beginning strokes of the minuscules also apply to the capitals, which you will understand as you continue to write. I need advise you no further except to take the trouble of learning the capitals from the examples that I have provided.

A A B B C C D D E E F F
 G G H H I I K K L L M M
 N N O O P P Q Q R R
 S S T T U U V V
 X X Y Y Z Z & & & &

~: Ludouicus Vicentin. scribebat:~

+ Rome anno domini +

• MDXXII •

A a b c d e f g h i k l m n o p q r s t u v x y z.
 . r .

~: Exempla per firmar la Mano:~

A - r o a b c d e e f g h i k l m n o p q p q
 r s t u x x y z, Et s t s s s s s t u v w

No e' Gloria il principio, ma il seguire. De'
 qui nasce l'honor uero. &

perfecto:

Che' vale in campo intrare, et poi fuggire?

Ille Idem. L. Vicefinus Scribebat Romae.
 D

[Examples of capitals and ampersands.]

Ludovicus Vicentinus wrote this out in the year of our Lord 1522 in Rome.

[Examples of lower-case letters.]

Examples for developing a firm hand.

[Model of the lower case.]

Glory is not achieved by setting out, but at the finish. That is the birth of honor, true and perfect. Why enter the field of battle, and then flee?

Written out in Rome by the selfsame L Vicentinus.

~: Deo optimo & Immortali auspice:-
 A b c d e e f g g h i k l m n o p q r s t u x x
 x y x y z & & &

Così uà il stato human: Chi questa sera finisce
 il corso suo, Chi diman nasce. Sol
 virtu doma morte' horrida
 , e, altera .

L u d o . V i c e t i m s R o m e ' i n P a r h i o n e
 s c r i b e b a .

◊ A N N ◊ M D X X I I ◊

Deo, & Virtuti omnia debent ,

A B C D E F G H I K L M N
 O P Q R S T V X Y Z
 a b c d e e f g g h i k l m n o p q r s t u x
 x y z & &

Est modus in rebus: sunt
 certi

demqz fines

Quos ultra citraqz nequit consistere
 Rectum

A A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q
 R S T V X Y Z

Medium tenere Beati

D

By the favor of perfect and immortal God.

[Examples of the lower case and ampersands.]

Such is the state of man: born at daybreak; at nightfall the course is run. Virtue alone conquers haughty and terrible death. Written out by Ludovico Vicentino in Rome at Parhione, in the year 1522. To God and virtue we owe all.

[Examples of swash capitals, lower-case letters and ampersands.]

Everything has its measure: beyond certain limits on either side nothing is right.

[Example of simple capitals.]

The middle way is best.

A a b b c d d e E f f g g h h i i k k l l
M m n n o p p q q r r s s t t u u v v x x y y z z

Ʒ Ʒ Ʒ Ʒ Ʒ Ʒ
Fient autem commode omnia, si recte tempora
dispensabuntur: Si singulis diebus statutas
horas litteris dabimus, neq;
negocio ullo
abstrahamur; quo minus aliquid
quotidie legamus..

Eodem Lud. Vicentino scribe 7. VII. Augusti.
In Alma Urbe

[Examples of swash capitals and lower-case letters.]
Everything will be well done if time is properly dispensed and every day we devote set hours to letters and let nothing prevent us from some measure of reading. Written out by the same Ludovico Vicentino on the seventh of August in his adoptive city.

F . Petrar. dic 7
Segui già le Speranze, el van desio: Hor
ho dinanci agliocchi un chiaro specchio
Don io veggio me stesso
el fallir
mio.
E quanto posso al fine m'apparecchio,
Pensando
al
breue viver mio nel quale
Sta mane' era un fanciullo, & hor
son
vecchio :-
Breue & irreparabile Tempus

F[rancesco] Petrarch said this. I followed hope and empty desire: now I can see my failings in a clear mirror I have before my eyes. And I can prepare myself at last, thinking of my brief life in which I was a boy this morning and now am an old man. Fleeting and irreparable is time.

Regnam illam procacium uitior^{um} auaritia^m
 fuge,
 cui cuncta crimina detestabili deuotione^m
 famulantur,
 que quidem Auari-
 tia
 studium pecunie^m habet, quam nemo Sa-
 piens concupuit: Ea quasi malis ve-
 nenis imbuta, corpus animumq^{ue}
 virilem effæmi-
 nat
 neq^{ue} copia neq^{ue} inopia minuitur
 Auarus in nullo bonus i se aut pessimus:—

Dismiss avarice, that queen of disgraceful ills which all misdeeds serve with detestable devotion: greed strives for lucre, which no wise man craves and, as if steeped in malign poisons, weakens the manhood of body and soul and is abated neither by riches nor poverty. A miser has no goodness; he is base in every respect.

Hoc excellentis est sapien-
 tia^m
 hominem sui ipsius habere notitiam,
 Nec ex dilectione, quam habet in se,
 ipso falli-
 tur
 Q bonum se reputet, cum non sit.
 Dicitur hoc Galenus: Scribebat
 Vicentinus i
 VRBE
 Potens quippe est homo suos quosq^{ue}
 actus dirigere
 re
 seipsum si agnouerit.
 VREA SENTENTIA

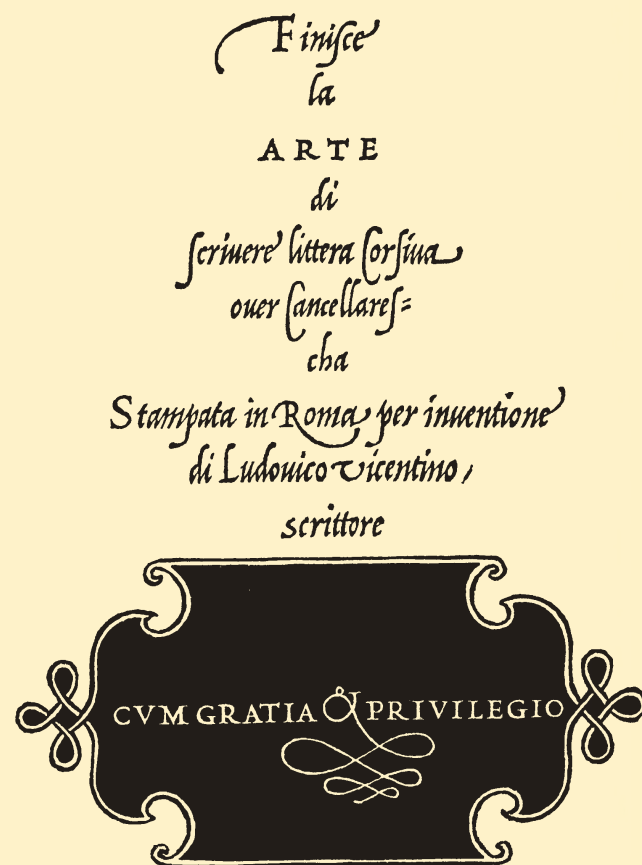
The highest wisdom in a man is knowing himself and not be misled by pride to fancy himself better than he is. This Galenus observed, and in Rome Vicentino wrote it out. A man who knows himself is the master of his actions. Golden sentiments.

Amant^{mo}. A. Beat^{mo} Car^o. Car^{mo}. Car^{mo}
 Dign^{mo}. Ex^{mo}. Ex^{sa}. R. Pn. Famos^{mo}
 Gnos^{mo}. Hon^{mo}. Hon^{mo}. Hon^{mo}. Hon^{mo}
 Ill^{mo}. Ill^{mo}. Ill^{mo}. Ill^{mo}. Ill^{mo}. Ill^{mo}. Ill^{mo}. Ill^{mo}
 L. M^{tas}. Mag^{tas}. Mag^{tas}. Nobil^{mo}.
 Principi Pres^{mo}. R^{mo}. Reueren^{mo}
 Scr^{mo}. S^{tas}. T^{tas}. Ven^{tas}. Vra^{mo}
 YZ
 L^{na}. Vicen^{tas}. Scibe^{tas}.

[Forms of address in flourished abbreviations.]
 Most honorable, excellent, illustrious, noble, reverend etc. Written out by
 Ludovico Vicentino.

Lettor, se' truoui cosa che
 t'offenda
 In questo Trattatel del Vicenti:
 no,
 Non te' marauigliar, Perche' diui:
 No,
 E non humano, e' quel, ch' e' senza
 menda.
 ¶
 Qui viuer non si puo senza
 defetto
 Che chi potesse' star senza pec-
 cato
 Seria simul a' Dio
 ch' e' sol perfetto

Reader, if you find a flaw in Vicentino's little treatise be not surprised, for perfection
 is not a human but divine quality. Here one cannot live without blemish: without sin
 one would be like God who alone is perfect.



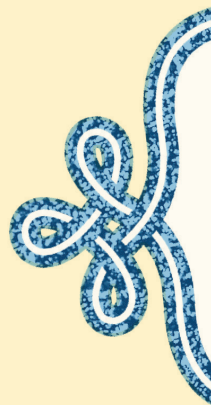
Here ends the art of writing chancery script. Printed in Rome from the original of Ludovico Vicentino, scribe. By grateful privilege.

Operina

THE AUTHOR was a copyist, papal scribe, publisher and type designer. He called himself Ludovico Vicentino, and wrote the name eight times into his short text. Yet we know him as Arrighi, a name that appears nowhere in the book.

Operina shows great handwriting on every page. It is more than a set of model sheets, however. It describes Arrighi's underlying forms and two basic entry movements. It covers the spacing of lines, words and letters. It deals with slant and joins.

Operina is a slim volume of 32 pages. It teaches italic handwriting and is still essential reading. Each page was printed from a separate woodcut by Ugo da Carpi, who is best known as a master of chiaroscuro engraving.



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