Captivating Cadel Capitals

presented by

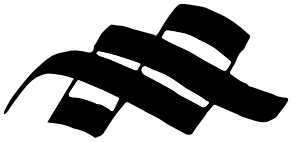
Vivian Mungall

A Cadel is a letter composed of a series of tape-like strokes, nearly parallel lines which interweave and knot together to produce a complete letter.

A False cadel is made up of 2 or more unconnected strokes. .

The capital G is based on the G in Rossi's exemplar.

A True cadel is a pattern that can be traced completely from beginning to end without retracing any part and the entire pattern can be made without lifting a quill pen from the paper.



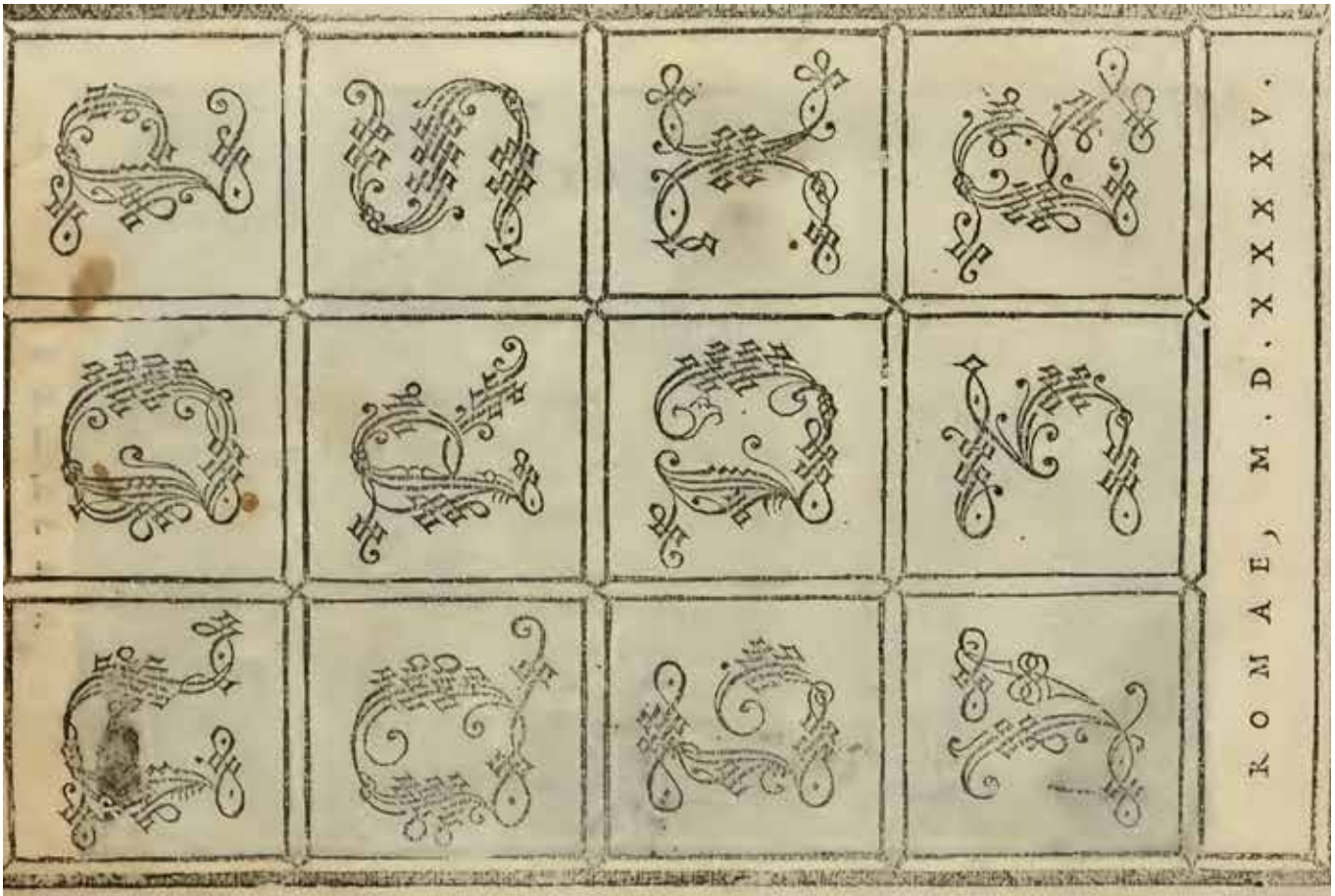
The capital K is based on the K in the Matriculation Register of the Basel Rectorate.

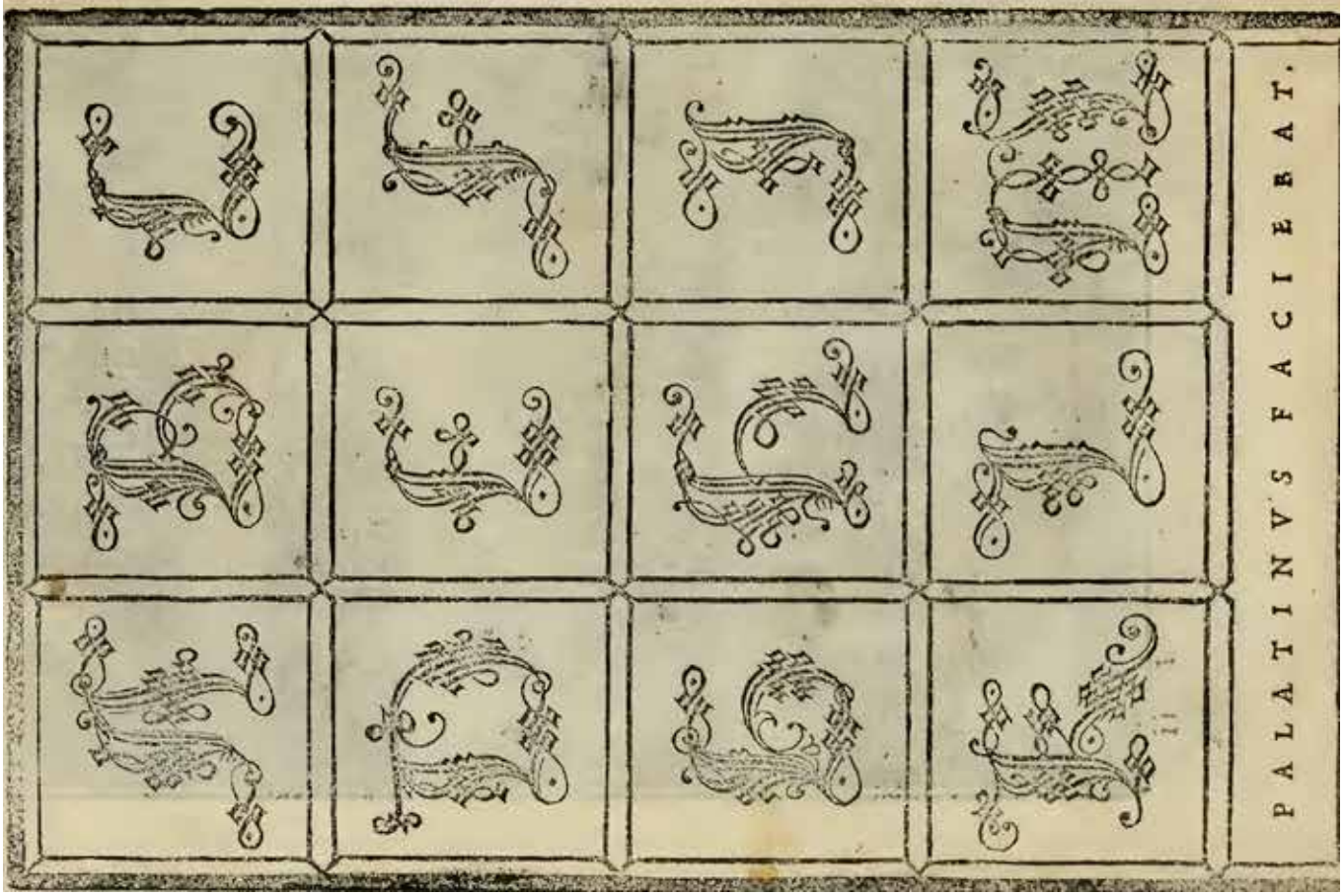
Both types of cadels make very attractive letters. Often both true and false cadels are used to create a letter

Cadel notes: Vivian Mungall: ©2020 - please do not pass the handout on to others. Thanks

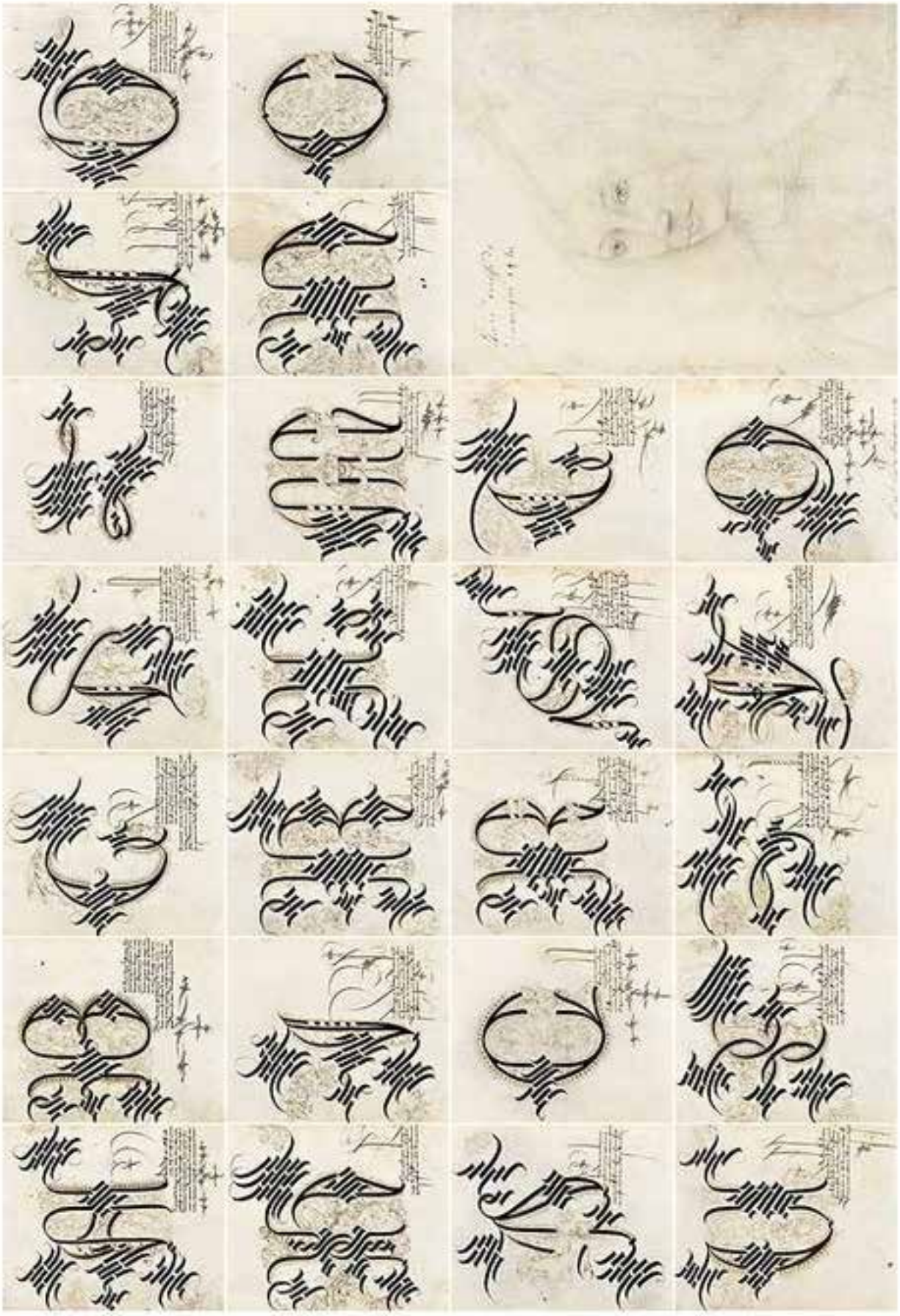
Marco Antonio Rossi's Woodcut Alphabet is from 1598.

Giovanni Battista Palatino in Informazione sull'immagine published 1578.



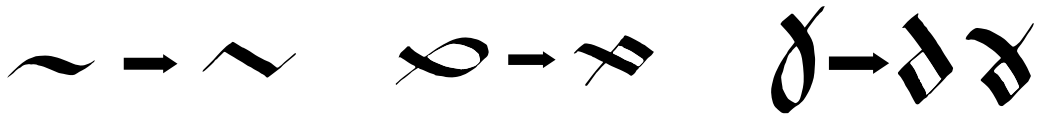


Cadel alphabet of **Marie de Bourgogne** circa 1480
is in the Louvre Museum's Rothschild Collection.



Cadel Basics

Cadel patterns are similar to curvilinear flourishes but use right angles instead of curves. These samples show simple flourishes that are used to build more complex designs.



The pen angle can vary from 30 to 90 degrees depending on the stroke, but for most strokes the pen angle is about 45 degrees.

The strokes should be parallel to each other and with an even size white space between the strokes. The white space should be a pleasing width to complement the thickness of the heavy stroke.

Strokes should cross at right angles. The beauty of the Cadel is the combination of hairlines and broad strokes.

Diagrams are a good method to learn the patterns. These diagrams are especially helpful when creating a letter without an historical reference to use as a guide.

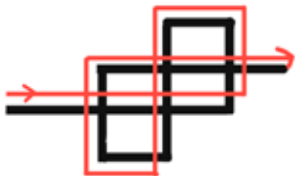


Diagram of C17 #1 for a quill pen

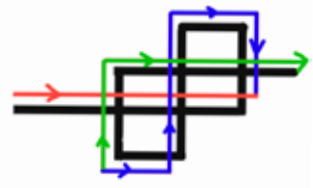


Diagram C17 #1 for metal broad pen nib.

Below are examples of some of the variations that can be applied to pattern C17 #1. This pattern can be found in Bill Hildebrandt's book, *Calligraphic Flourishing: A New Approach to an Ancient Art* and in both of my books.

A. All parallel lines are straight with no curves.

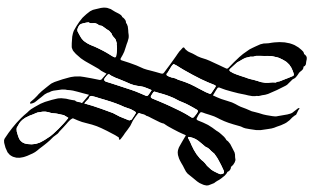
B. All parallel lines are slightly curved.

C. Condensed

D. Rotated

E. Elongated

F. The beginning & ending stroke do not extend beyond the edges of the pattern creating a closed design.

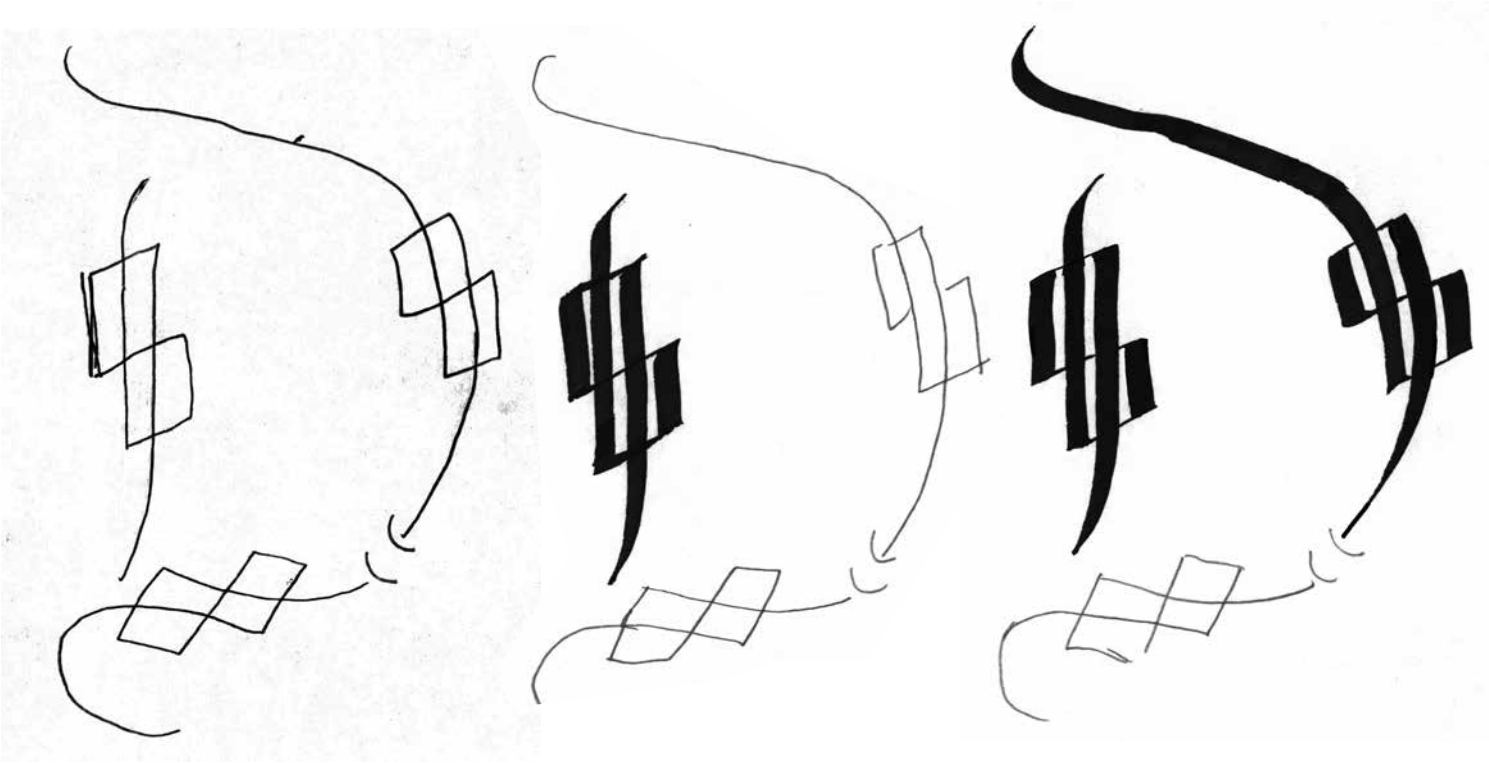


G. Stretched out with 4 curved strokes added on the corners of the design. They can be added as you letter or after the pattern is finished.

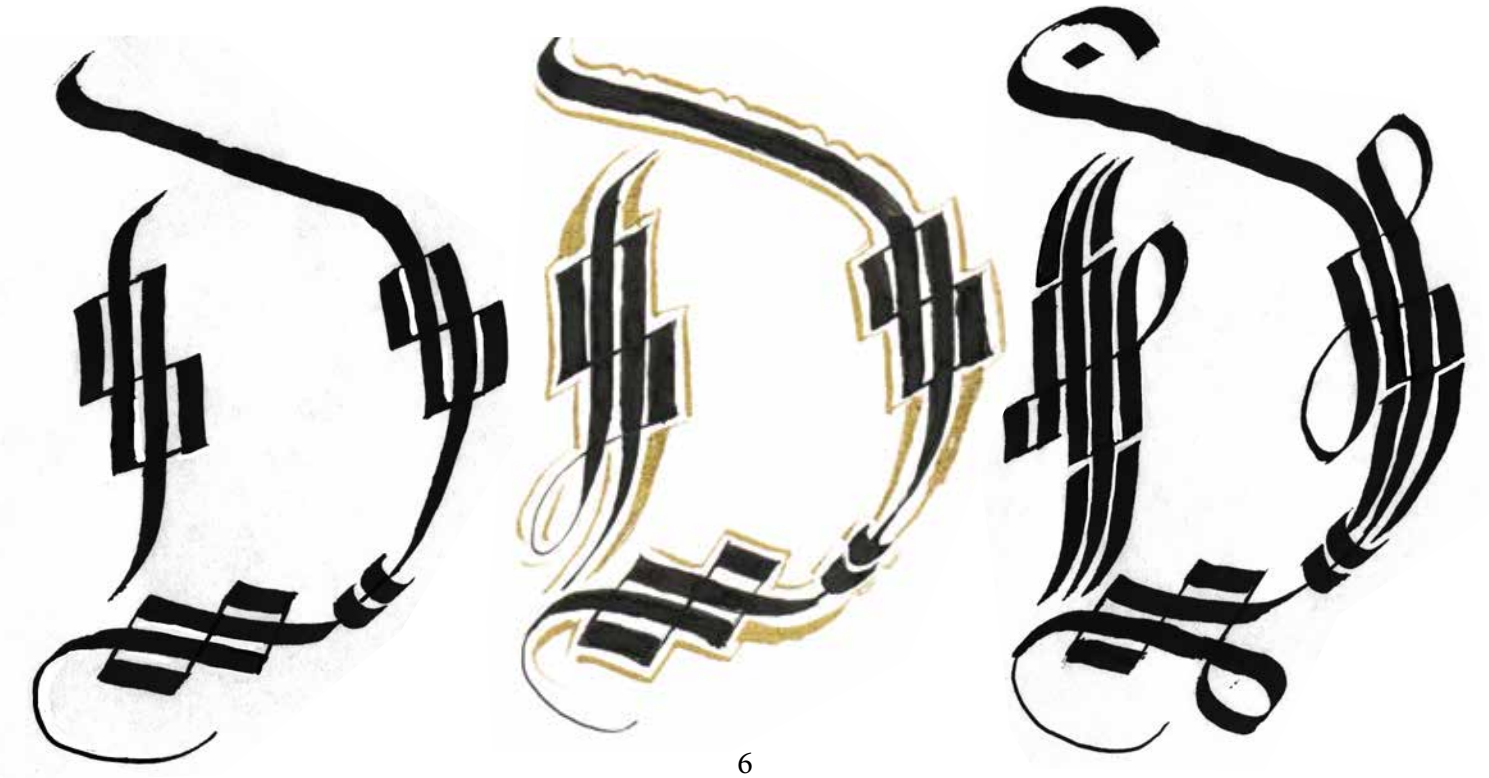
H. More condensed with 2 curved strokes and 2 right angle strokes added on the corners of the design. It can be less confusing to add these stokes after the pattern is completed.

Cadels were used with any vertical broad pen lettering style. When going through the historical works, the rounder rotunda lettering was used in Southern Europe while in northern Europe the narrower gothic style of lettering was used.

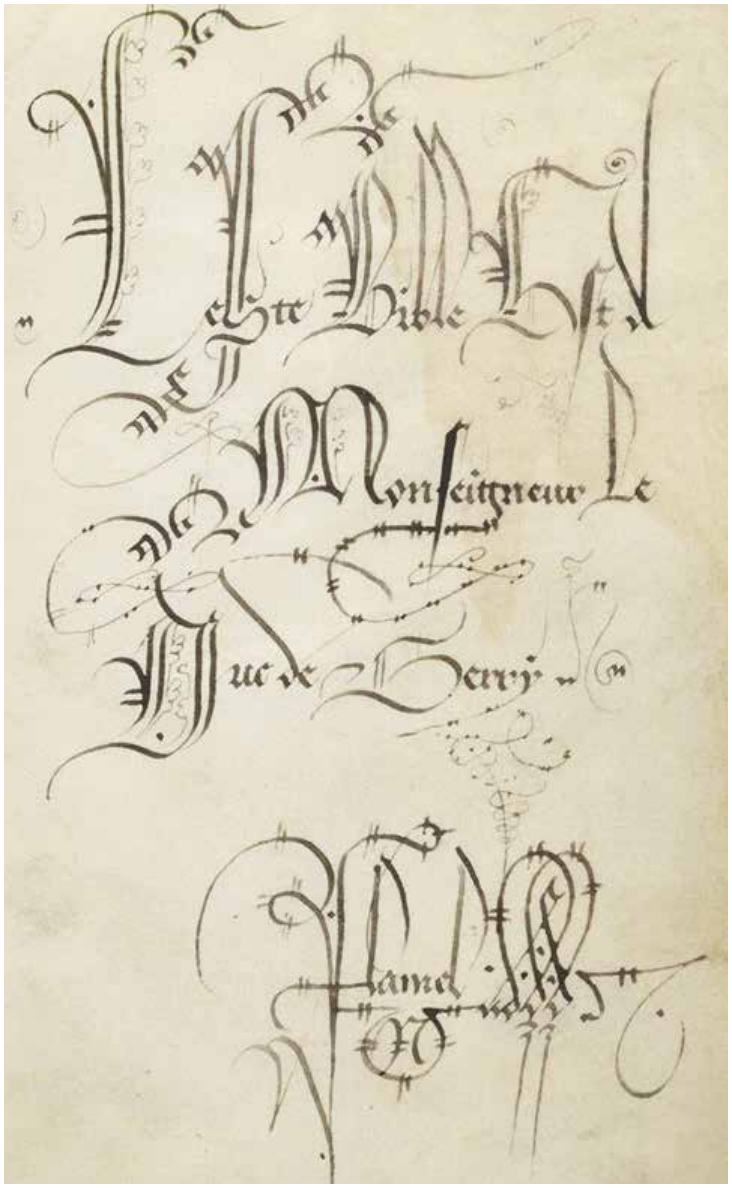
Vivian's Capital D created from 3 repetitions of the pattern C17 #1.

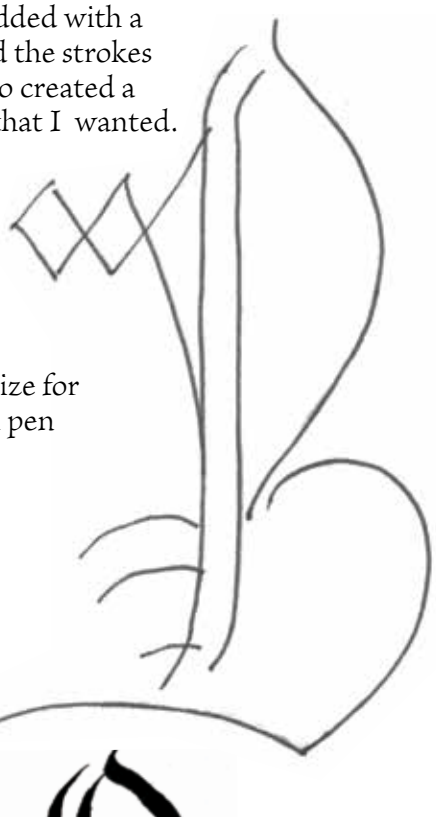


All the examples are actual size and lettered with a 3.8 Pilot Parallel Pen. This shows the progression of making the letter using only the basic pattern. I first lettered the capital freehand. When I had the form I liked, I made a skeleton (pencil outline) of the letter. Then I placed the skeleton under a sheet of paper and fine tuned the it - like raising or lowering the cadel in the curve of the D. Each time a change was made, I created a new skeleton and lettered it again to see if more changes were needed. When there were no more changes, I created the final letter. Example 6 shows what you can do when you add flourishes and extra stem strokes to the pattern thus creating a more complex looking letter. I prefer to add the extra strokes when the lettering is completed and before the filigree or flourishes are added.



Flamel's Capital B was lettered with a 3.8 Pilot Parallel Pen and the filigree added with a Micron pen. Using a proportional divider to make a taller capital, I measured the strokes and created a pencil sketch. Next, I inked in over the pencil sketch in order to created a skeleton. Then I followed the same steps as the D until I achieved the letter that I wanted.



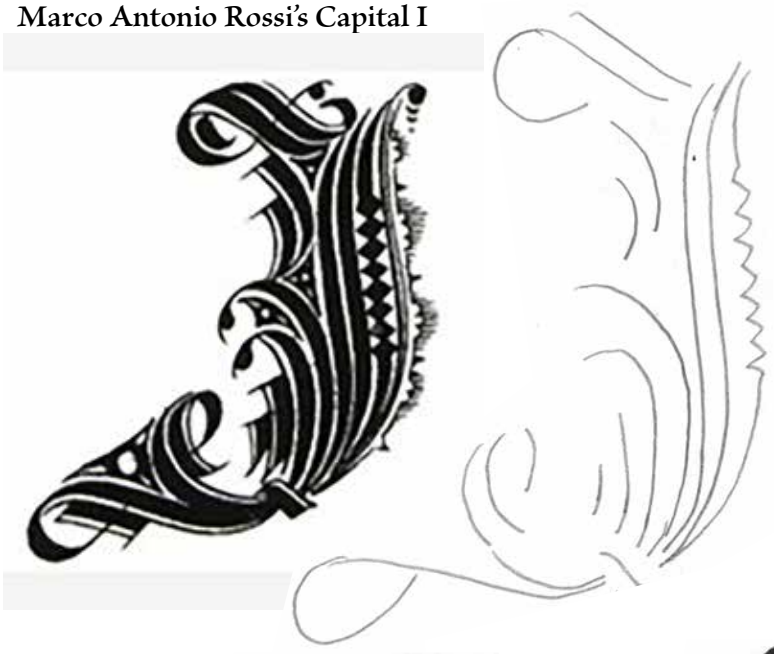


actual size for
3.8 mm pen

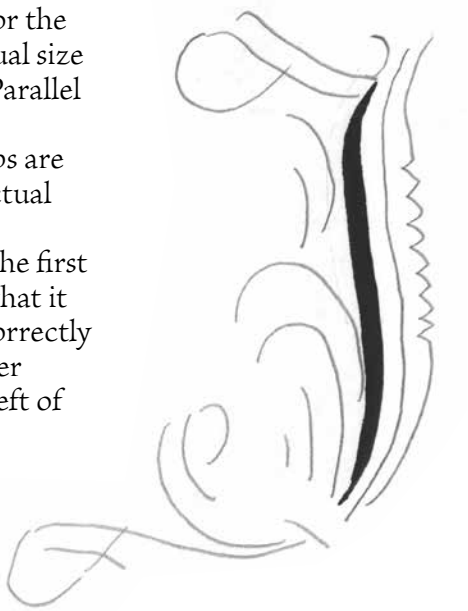
This design can be used to create other similar looking letters like N, M, A, etc.

Not actual size
The white space between the 2 strokes of the stem could be made wider and a design placed in side or the pattern made more complex with a loops or right angle cadels as H on page 5.

Marco Antonio Rossi's Capital I

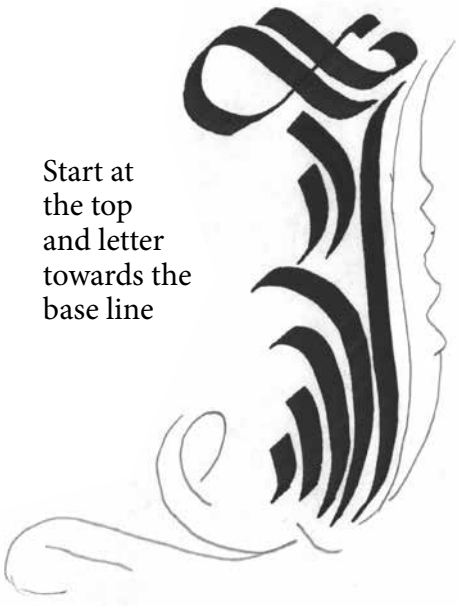


The skeleton for the Capital I is actual size for a 3.8 Pilot Parallel Pen.
The stroke steps are smaller than actual size.
I started with the first long stroke so that it was easier to correctly place the smaller strokes to the left of the it.

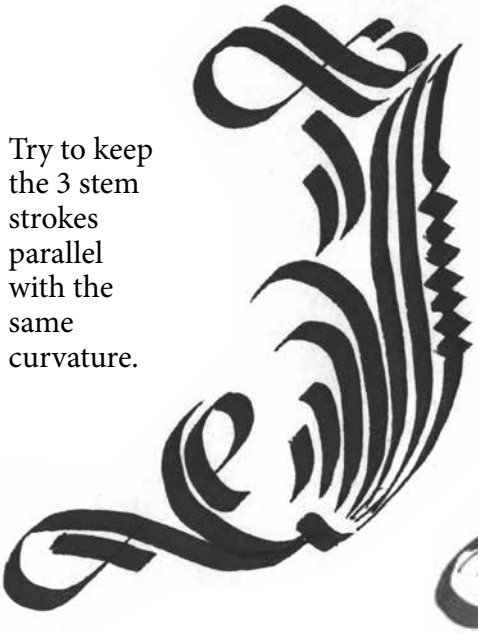


The tops strokes came next to prevent smudging.

Start at the top and letter towards the base line



Try to keep the 3 stem strokes parallel with the same curvature.

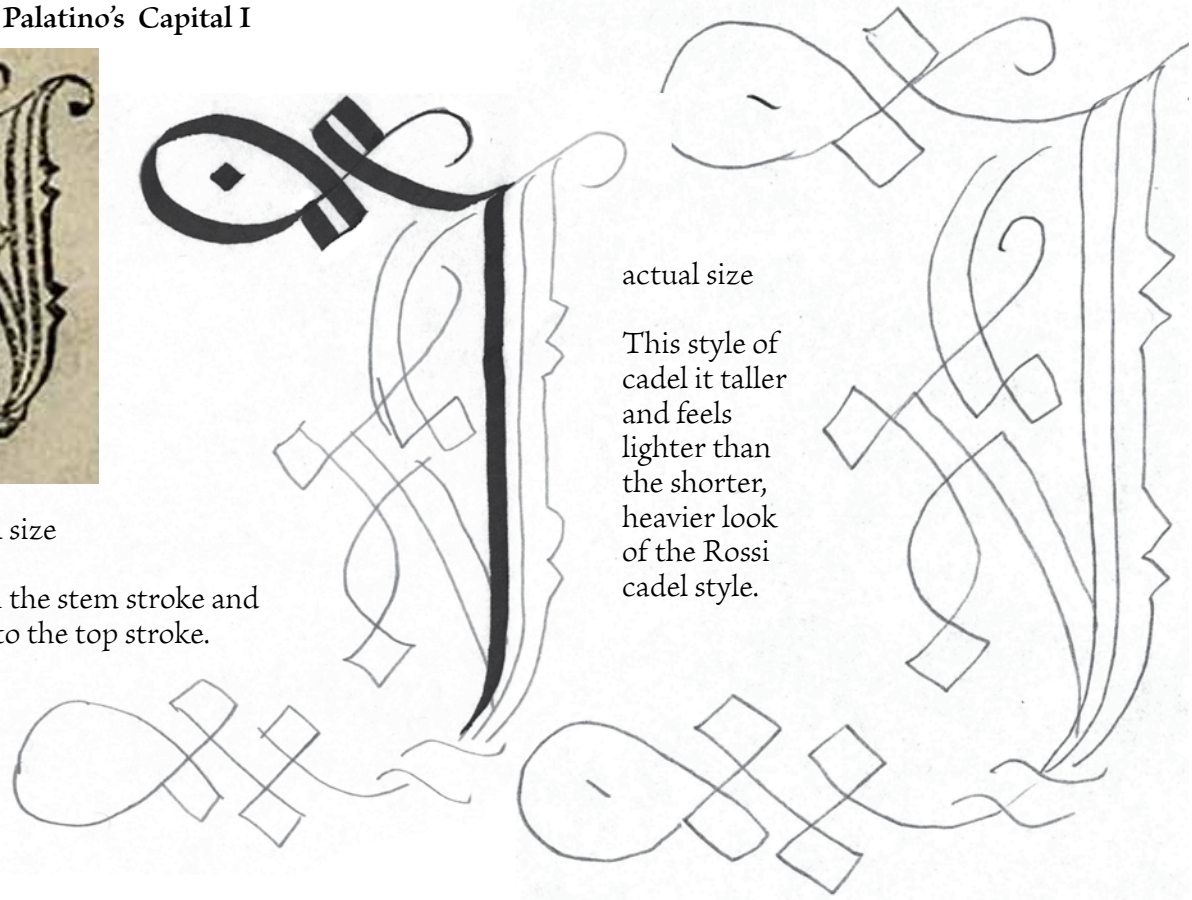


Two ways to finish the Capital I.

Giovanni Battista Palatino's Capital I

not actual size

Start with the stem stroke and continue to the top stroke.

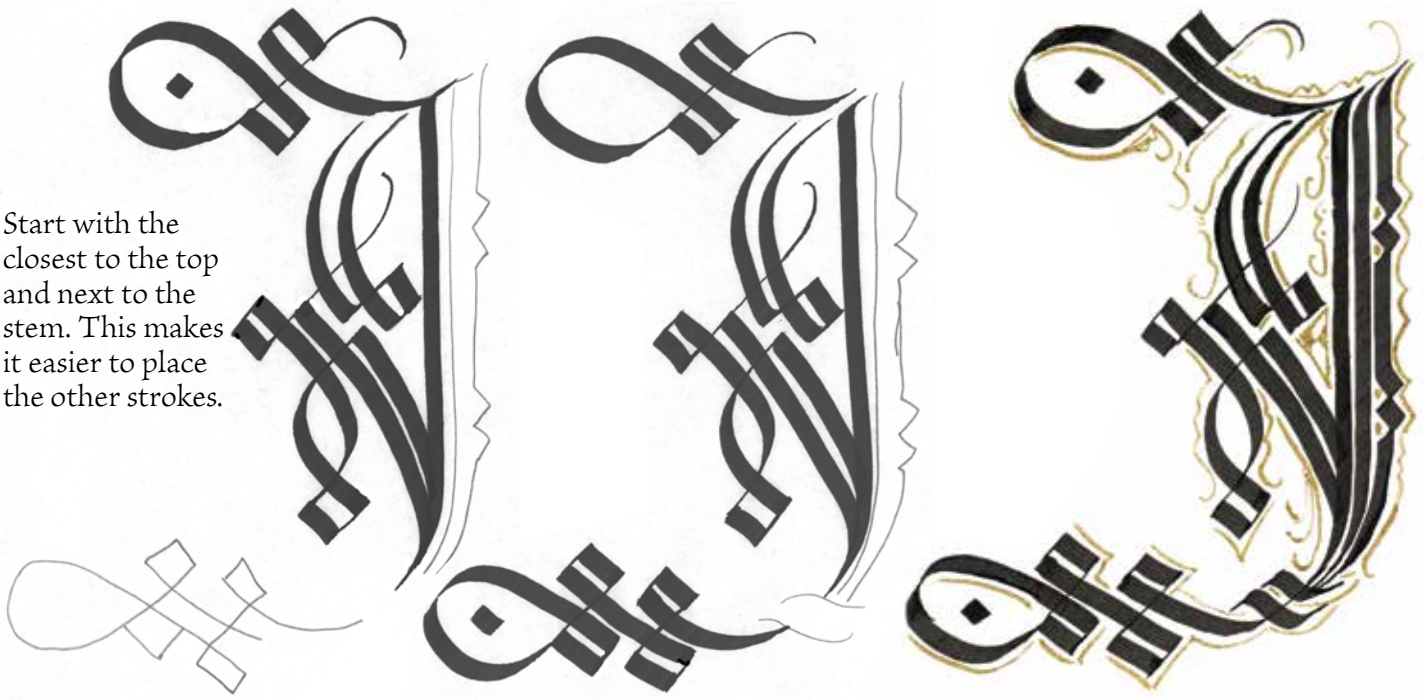


actual size

This style of cadel it taller and feels lighter than the shorter, heavier look of the Rossi cadel style.

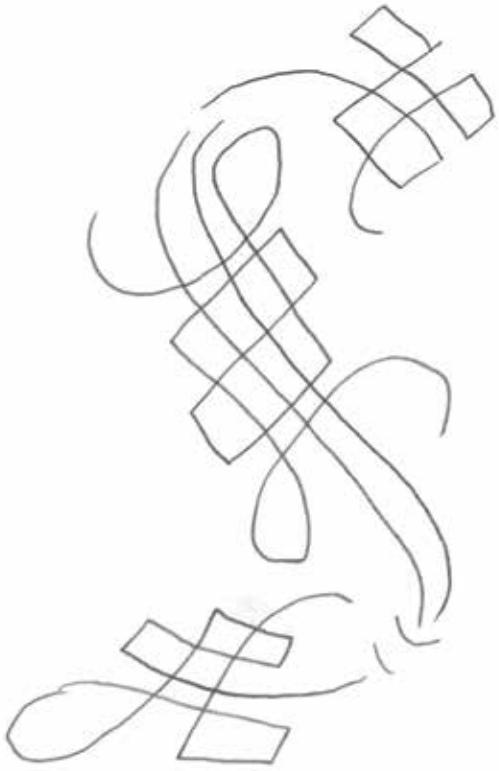
The skeleton is sized for a 3.8 mm Parallel Pilot Pen. The steps have been reduced in size in order to fit the page. Using the copy machine, the letter was enlarged and the copy was placed a under a sheet of paper to create the first copy of the letter for the skeleton. By working from the photocopy, the letter was quickly sized to fit the project. Try several sizes of broad pen nibs to see how changing the size of the nib will change the feel of the letter.

Start with the closest to the top and next to the stem. This makes it easier to place the other strokes.



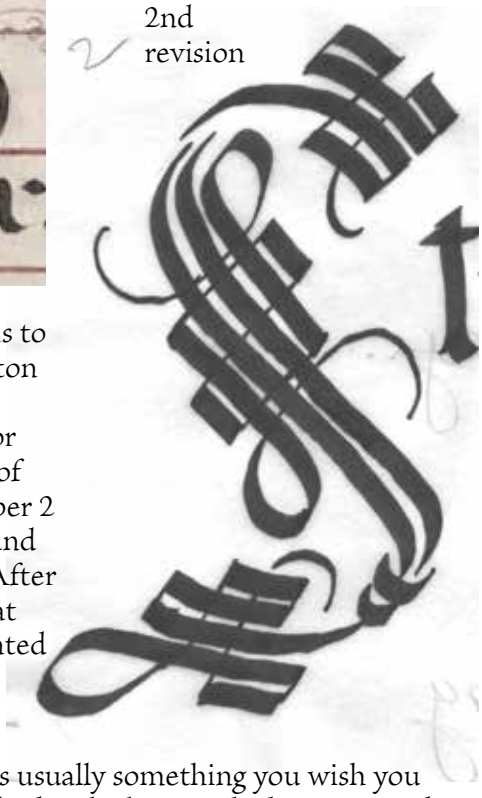
Capital S from Ejecutoria de hidalguía de el Yllustre Señor Capitán Martín de Angulo Montesinos se recivió en esta Villa de Ossuna año de 1567, is a combination the two of the many S's found in the manuscript on the history of his family.

This is one of the revisions to fine tune the S. The skeleton was placed under tracing paper to get the placing for the strokes and evenness of the white spaces. In number 2 the strokes felt cramped and the white space uneven. After reviewing it, I decided that the loops needs to be pointed instead of round.

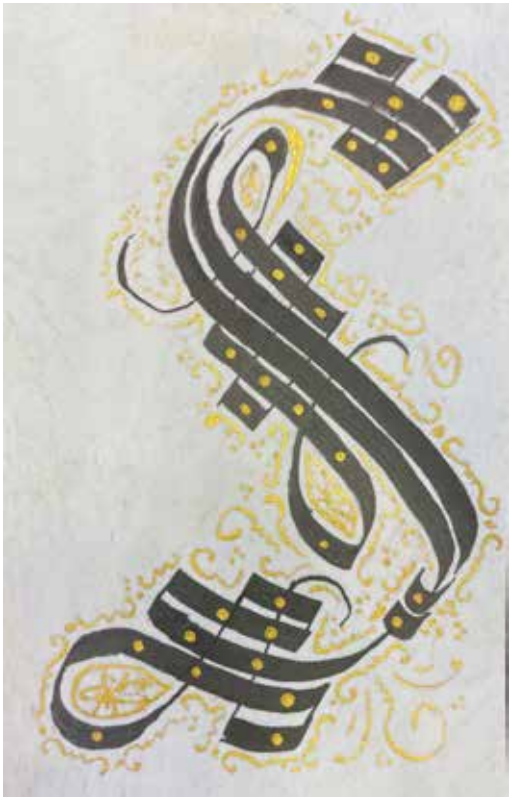


Actual size skeleton for 3.8 Pilot Parallel pen.

Reduced size of the drawing I created while watching TV.



In a finished piece, there is usually something you wish you could change. In this finished S, the loop at the bottom needs to be more oval and more white space between some of the strokes. Over all, it has good balance and nice shape.



Reduced size of the finished letter on vellum. The gold filigree is Aspen Ziller Gold ink.

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Osondrea's Class Notes on Cadels. Artemisia Collegium AS36. http://www.rocks4brains.com/~cat/cadel.pdf