

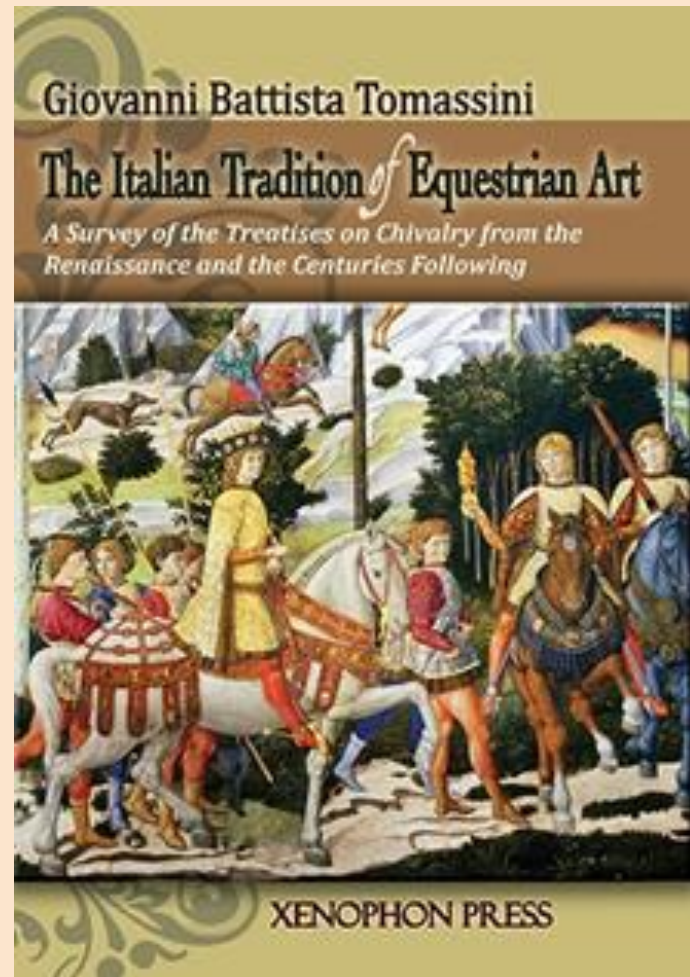
# 16th Century Italian Horsemanship for the Non-Equestrian Courtier



Landgravin Else  
Hunrvogt, OP, OL

Anonymous, mid-16th Century Italian, Met Museum,

[WorksofChivalry.com](http://WorksofChivalry.com)



## ***Book of the Courtier*** **Baldasare Castiglione 1528**

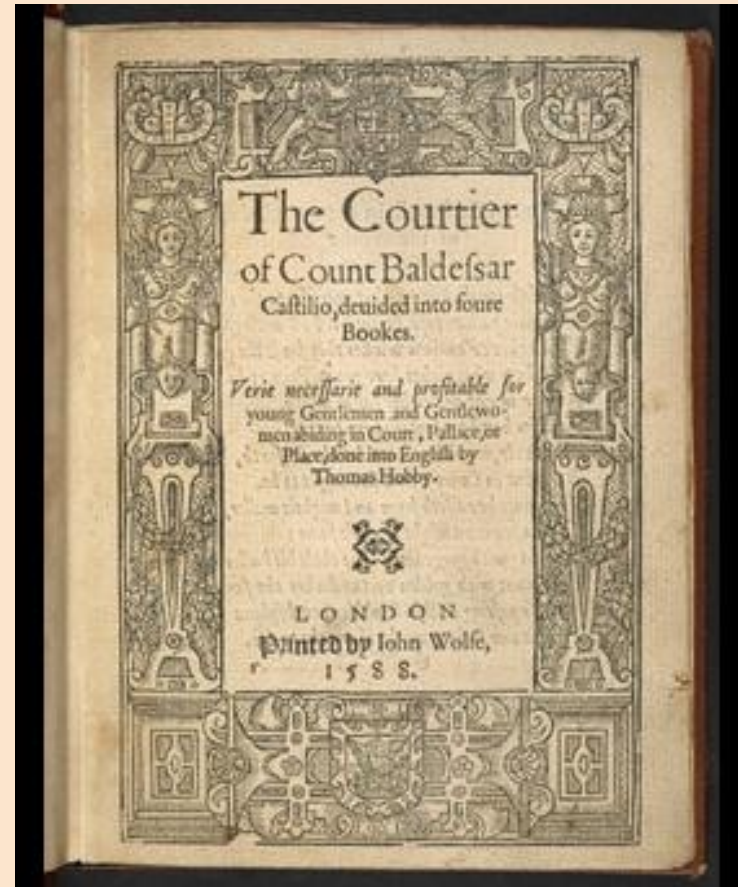
I would hope that our Courtier is a perfect horseman in every kind of saddle and in addition to understanding horses and knowledge of riding, I would have him work diligently to elevate himself a little above others in everything, so that he may be well recognized for his excellence. As we read of Alcibiades, that he surpassed all the nations with whom he lived each in their particular province, so I would have our Courtier exceed all others, in each of their best professions.



Raphael painting of the author

## ***Book of the Courtier*** **Baldasare Castiglione 1528**

And since it is the special pride of the Italians to ride well with the bridle [a la brida], to school wild horses with consummate skill, and to play at tilting and jousting - in these things let him be among the best of the Italians, In tournaments and in the arts of defence and attack, let him shine among the best in France,. In lance throwing, bull-fighting and in casting spears and darts, let him excel among the Spaniards. But above everything, he should temper all his movements with a certain good judgement and grace, if he wishes to merit that universal favor which is so greatly prized.



# ***Book of the Courtier*** **Baldasare Castiglione 1528**

You see how ungraceful a rider is who strives to sit bolt upright in the saddle in the manner we call Venetian as compared with another who seems not to be thinking about it, and sits his horse as free and steady as if he were on foot.

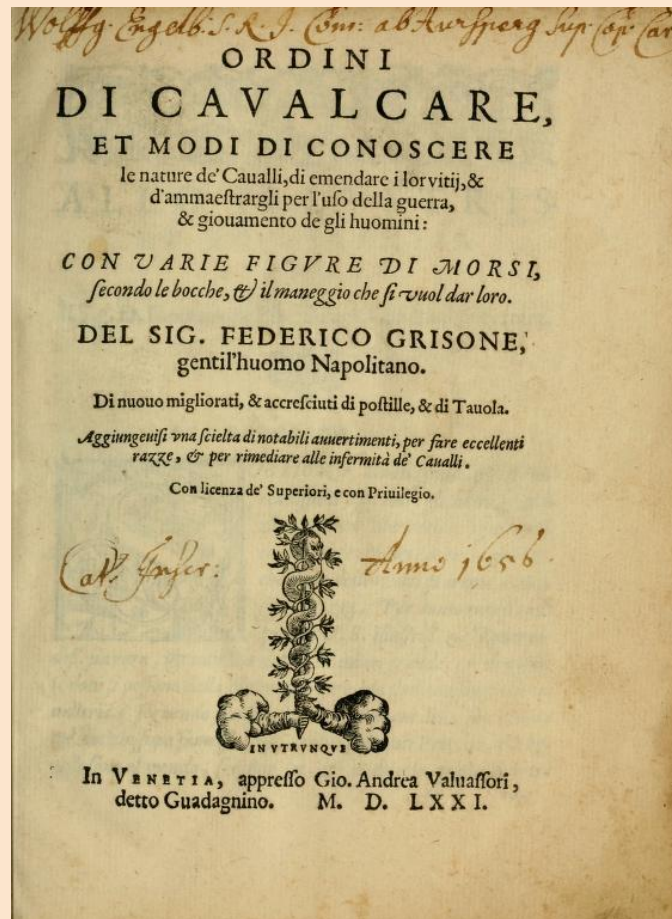
IL LIBRO DEL CORTEGIANO  
DEL CONTE BALDESAR  
CASTIGLIONE.



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## ***Gli Ordini di Cavalcare*** **Federico Grisone, 1550**

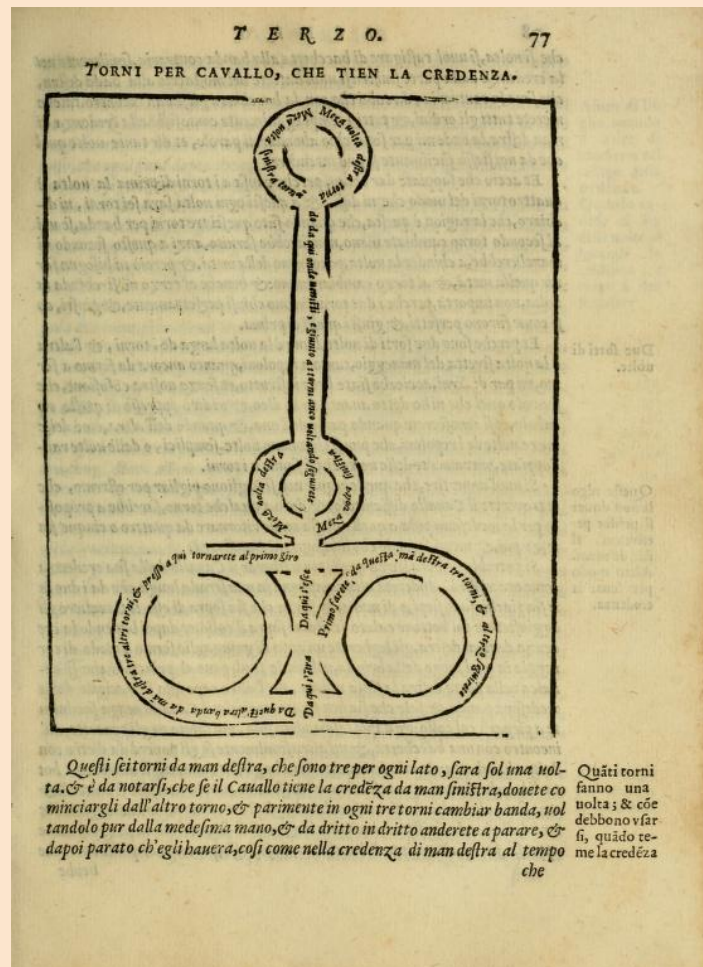
Having recognized how rare **Your Most Illustrious and Revered Highness** is, not only endowed with a great mind and how many gifts nature has lavished on you, and how highly you prize the art of riding (in constant conformity to the natural disposition found in your illustrious and very old family), I resolve today **to choose you** among so many princes there are in the world, as the dedicatee of this little work of mine.





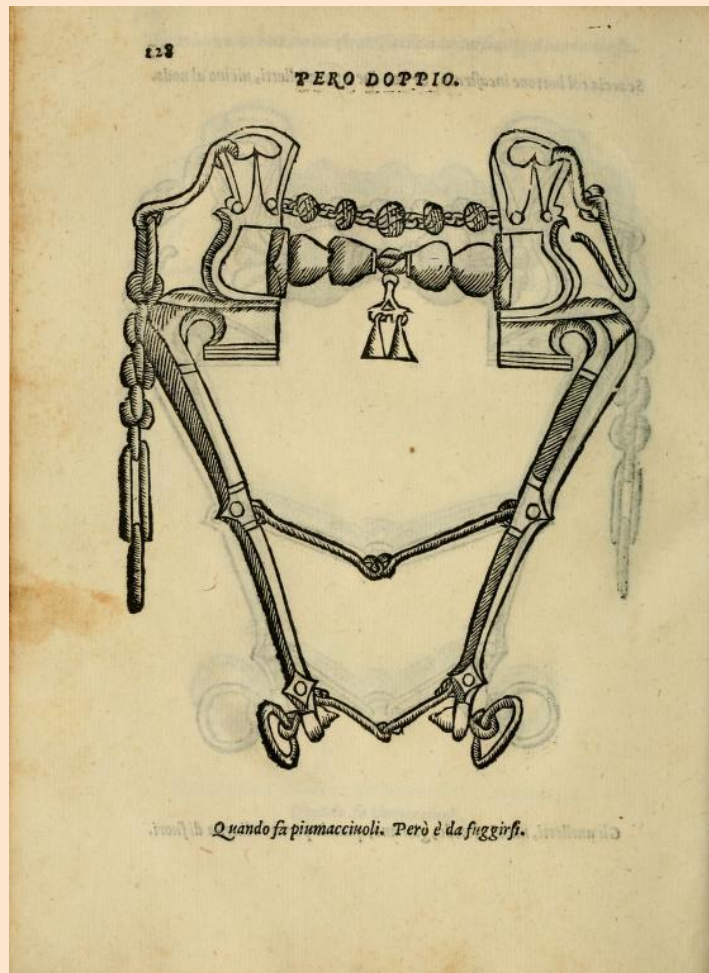
## ***Gli Ordini di Cavalcare*** **Federico Grisone, 1550**

And do not think that the horse, although he is well put together by nature, can work well on his own, without human aid and true teaching. It is necessary to awaken the parts of his body and the hidden virtues that are within him through means of the art of riding, and through good discipline his goodness will become manifest to a greater or lesser degree. On the contrary, when the art of riding is false, it ruins him, and hides every good quality, therefore when it is good it compensates that many areas in his nature where he is lacking.



## ***Gli Ordini di Cavalcare*** **Federico Grisone, 1550**

Although the art of riding is **generally taught by people of low rank**, I did not disdain to write about it, I **did not want to teach this art by personal example**, but rather through the **written rules**. My intention, by writing these rules, was to **redeem the art of riding from vile expression**, knowing full well that they endeavour to lift up this virtuous and admirable art, the shade of which becomes any worthy knight. **Kings and celebrated men were in the past called masters in this art.**



## ***Gli Ordini di Cavalcare*** **Federico Grisone, 1550**

Once there was a time in the Kingdom of Naples, known as Sybaris, where **not only men, but also horses, learned how to dance to the sound of the symphony**

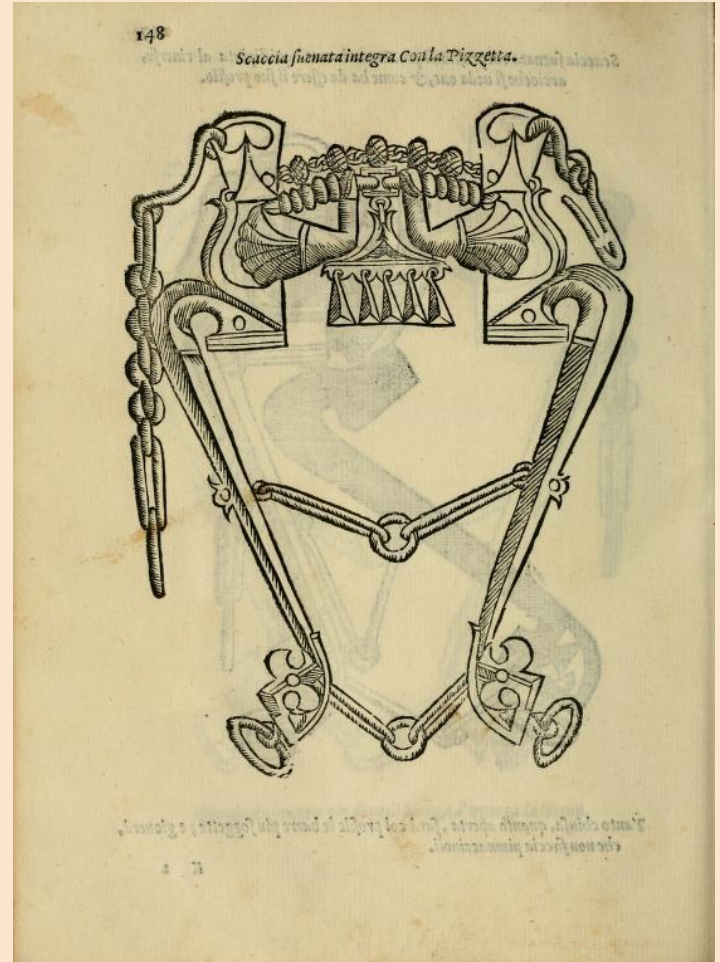


## ***Gli Ordini di Cavalcare*** **Federico Grisone, 1550**

One cannot call a life abundant, a feast complete, a game valorous, or a battle great unless there were horses.

Horses have been and will ever be necessary...not only noble men need them, but also men of lower ranks who through their efforts wish to better themselves and become illustrious.

Who cannot say that every Prince considers it glorious to call himself Knight, the name born of this regal animal.



# ***Trattato dell'imbrigliare, atteggiare, e ferrare cavalli***

## **Cesare Fiaschi 1556**

In my homeland, Ferrar, it is customary to hold feasts, tournaments, and various sorts of cavalcades in which each rider, according to his power and with every careful diligence strives to have the very best horses available, and having to be held a magnificent and sumptuous feast **for the memory of the creation of our Illustrious and most Excellent Prince**, for the greatest enjoyment and amusement of the gentlemen an honorable tournament was prepared in which appeared so **richly armed and fairly dressed knights, riding their horses so easily and with such skill**, which certainly nowhere else to be seen any better; because this **filled the bystanders with wonder**. I affirmed that, **realizing my abilities and not being able to stand the comparison with this honorable and noble company, I was driven by the zeal for my own honor to retire from it** [that company], so as not to turn red in the face in the presence of such valiant knights, and with the firm intention not to wear weapons again nor to join similar knights, until such time as I was sure to be worthy of such company.

# ***Trattato dell'imbrigliare, atteggiare, e ferrare cavalli***

## **Cesare Fiaschi 1556**

the good rider must also know how to recognize the natures and qualities of horses, and he must ride well and gracefully with a gentle and pleasant hand, **in time and with exactness**, and he must be strong in the saddle, adapting himself according to the occasion and the time, so as to beat them [the horses] or caress them, or only keep them into fear, fatiguing them more or less with the exercise that they are doing. All the time **keeping his watch on their mind** and on their forces and acting in accordance with them, never fearing that there is a defect in the horse. And he must **refrain from imitating those who are plagued by anger** and those that do what duty and reason does not require. Neither he should follow that example of those who give so hard in toil to horses, both to win their laziness beating them a lot (which causes the opposite effect, because the more they are beaten the more they get discouraged) or because they are brave and good and willing, but without much force, who doing this in the end obtain a minor effect, being unable to moderate themselves appropriately.

# Trattato dell'imbrigliare, atteggiare, e ferrare cavalli

## Cesare Fiaschi 1556

And because to some rider it might seem strange that I wanted to put Music in my second treatise, judging it possibly unnecessary, in response I say that **without measure and time it cannot be made good**, and so I show it, and those who do not know how to do it by art will learn it through continuously riding practice.



# *Trattato dell'imbrigliare, atteggiare, e ferrare cavalli* Cesare Fiaschi 1556

The good Musician, who prefers to appear rather bizarre than to play an instrument out of tune or false or not entirely good, not to play Music if it is not excellent and perfect; and this happens to be excellent and rare to hear, not so much for his skill, but also for the quality of the instrument and the music, in which all who practice this exercise will find an example, so that they make sure that they will be able to procure good horses.



Fiaschi Palace, Ferrara

# *Trattato dell'imbrigliare, atteggiare, e ferrare cavalli* Cesare Fiaschi 1556

It is bad to hear a rider scream on horseback and also very bad to see him squirm with his limbs and with his waist, because with that he must move only a little bit at a certain time to aid him [the horse], so that he does the rider's will, showing also, in this way to the bystanders **not to be a statue, but instead, to have elegance and good manner in staying on a horse.**



Arms

# *Trattato dell'imbrigliare, atteggiare, e ferrare cavalli* Cesare Fiaschi 1556

All those riders who will show in public must take care to keep the time with the waist and the limbs, both head and arms as legs and feet, always making every effort to appear on horseback as graceful as they can, because, besides being beautiful to watch, they will also help the horse, that will appear more graceful and better in any sort of air he will perform.

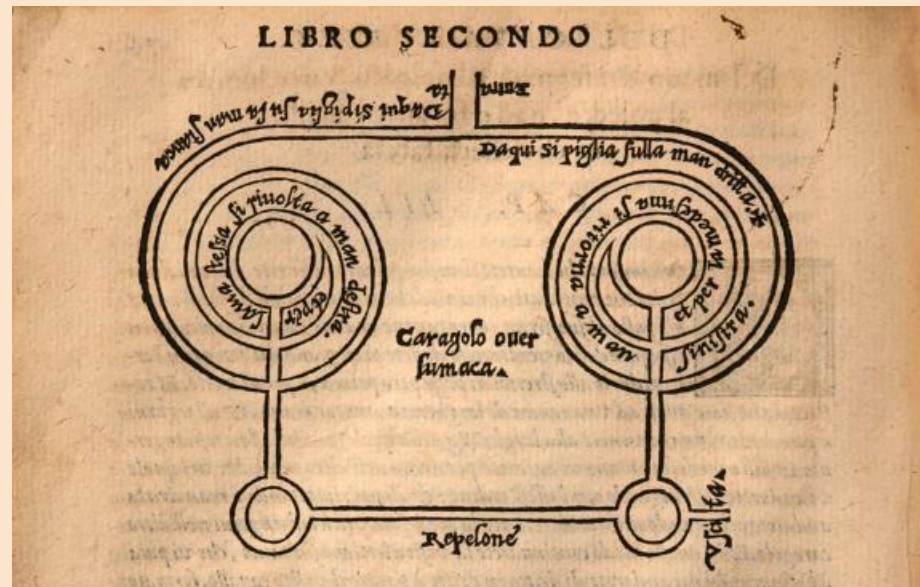






## *Il cavallarizzo* Claudio Corte 1562

Much is to be commended **Sir Cesare Fiaschi** truly honored knight, who has put the above canter to music, to communicate clearly and well (as I understand it, **the big time**) and the big measure that is requires. I would not only place it to music, but also all the other exercise (as he did). but knowing that the **most of the riders, and professor of this art are ignorant of music**, as are the majority of men, not to confuse them. I didn't: judging that a good practice, and time after time, and exercise will produce the effect.



## ***Il cavallarizzo*** **Claudio Corte 1562**

And that is true you can see in considering that **without the horse it would be difficult to enjoy that great pleasure and happiness, which the view of the countryside away from the tumult of the city** and the goodness of the weather and the serenity of the sky gives to men, being impossible to go there on foot without a lot of effort and discomfort, which would take away the pleasure, either in whole or in large part.



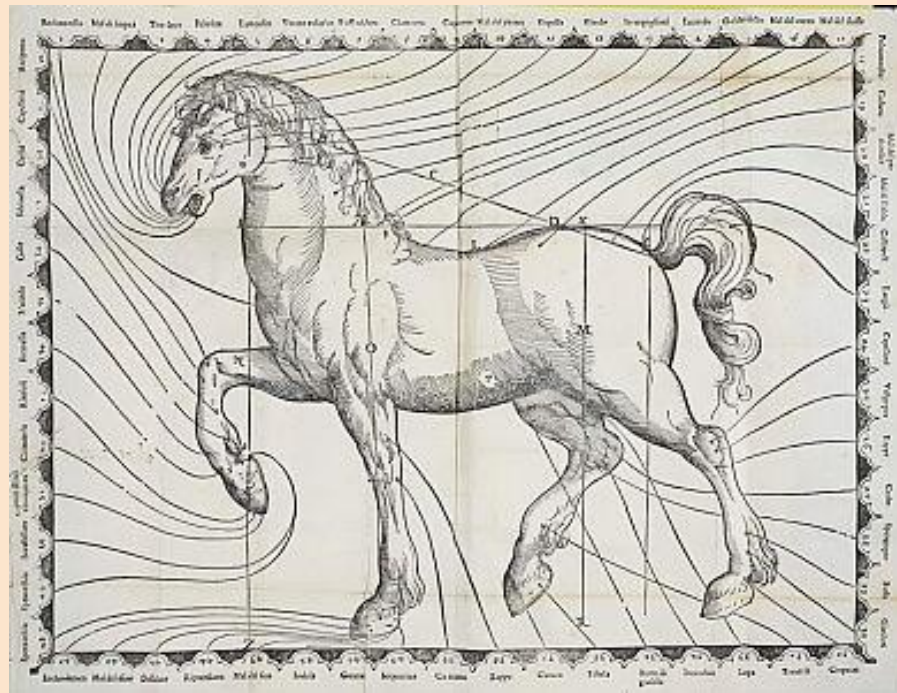
## ***Il cavallarizzo***

### **Claudio Corte 1562**

...**the masters** who are not able to ride **should be patient** to wait for [their horses] to be done [trained]. or removed from the vice, which they have acquired because of bad manners and excessive beatings, and they should not act like now does with me a **Roman gentleman, who I do not want to name for good respect, that as soon as I have ridden and given a strong lesson to his friesian,** gives another the same day and very often with another bridle, so if his mouth is spoiled, with his damage, and further damaged by everyone that acts this way, it should not be blamed the horseman, who, being and expert of the art, should be believed, and **they [the masters] do not have to do what they do not know and what ignorant riders counsel them.**

## ***Delle razze, disciplina del cavalcare, et altre cose pertinenti ad essercitto così fatto*** **Giovan Battista Ferraro 1562**

the Rider must stand up straight, solid and loose on the horse, however **he must not look affected or angry, but with cheerful rather than a severe face**; so it happened than many Riders looked more beautiful dressed ( that is to say armed) than unarmed because under the visor of their helmer, whatever was their face, happy or sad, the affectation or mutation of the members of the face could not be seen... I wish, therefore, that starting from the head, **when the Rider is on horseback (as I said) shows more joy than melancholy in his face**, so that it will not only bring a better view, but **it will also show to the bystanders that he well possesses what he does**, or is about to do, and that it is very easy for him.



From Ferraro's 1570 Husbandry text

# ***La Gloria del cavallo*** **Pasquale Caracciolo 1566**

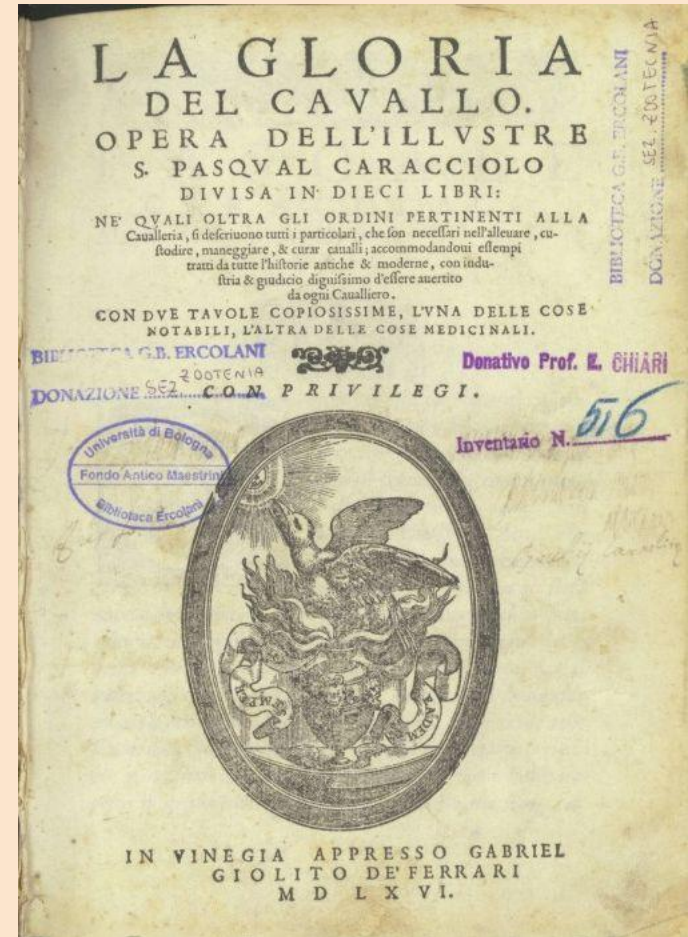
And Although the use of combat on horseback with wonderful dexterity and artifice has always been flourishing, more than in any other part of the world, especially under **the Serene Kings of Aragon; who, when they lived in Naples, used to take delight in good riding, renewing everyday various equestrian games, thus encouraging the Nobles to do the same**, giving them every support and leisure, in order to make them dedicate [themselves] to weapons and Horses.



# La Gloria del cavallo

## Pasquale Caracciolo 1566

The illustrious homeland can therefore be glorified more than other cities, being adorned by many excellent men in this very rare and difficult art, who understand almost with human intellect, the tone of the voice, the gestures, the rewards and the threats of the Rider and exactly obey his will. So that, in a way, it seems that in its actions it became really a man, so that it can do anything but speak.



# **La Gloria del cavallo**

## **Pasquale Caracciolo 1566**

having said that **Music is very useful**, I add, that it is necessary, in order to understand the measure of time in circling and in the other airs.



*The design book of Filippo Ursoni, 1554*

# **La Gloria del cavallo**

## **Pasquale Caracciolo 1566**

To whom, as for the Orator, besides the Art, are required the Imitation and the exercise, and above all the desire to achieve excellence: things that are so effective in every profession, that no one should distrust himself when, left the vain games and the idleness contrary to virtue, he practices all the time, learning: and **so much more for a Noble man, whom having to surpass the other in every praise, as he surpasses, them in dignity, with more ardor he will have to strive to acquire the perfection of this very honorable profession in which the military glory mainly consists.**



*The design book of Filippo Ursoni, 1554*

# ***La Gloria del cavallo***

## **Pasquale Caracciolo 1566**

**Don Carlo of Lanoia, Prince of Solmone,** Who exercising admirably in every way on horseback. among other trials made two which aroused great admiration and were told to me by reliable persons: **once he rode with a flat saddle and without stirrups a very wild horse, keeping between the saddle and the boot, in the place of the knees, two large silver coins, that never moved: and another time keeping them with the same firmness between the feet and the stirrups, running fast with a horse.** He participated in jousting with lances of enormous size and often using saddles without cantles, to show great strength and agility.



DaVinci sketch for the Sforza monument

# *Essais de Destiers*

## Michel de Montaigne 1595

During my childhood in Naples, the Prince of Sulmona, to show the strength of his position while he was maneuvering a reluctant horse with all sorts of riding exercises kept below his knees and under his toes some reals [coins], as if they were nailed



Portrait of Michel de Montaigne c1578 by Dumonstier

## ***La nobilta di Napoli in Dialogo*** **Giuseppe Cacchii 1569**

not only in Italy, Spain, Turkey but throughout the world there isn't such a rare beauty of horses as in such a noble and wonderful city, which is for the natural quality of the air causes men to take delight in these beautiful horses and in the art of riding, in **which are exercised not only Mercenaries to earn their living, but also any and all honorable gentlemen and riders for pleasure**. Through the practice of riding all of these people become elevated just as were **Alexander the Great, Caesar, and the same Mars**. And to learn this beautiful art of riding, men of all conditions come to Naples from all parts of Europe, some to become perfect masters, and many nobles instead, for their solace, delight and pleasure, as the king of Naples did in ancient times...

# *Cavellerie della citta di Ferrara* likely Augusto Argenti 1576

They were on horseback armed in the ancient style with morions and shields covered with mirrors of steel, which made a great reflection and they were dressed in rich white drapes made of gold and with superb plumes on top.

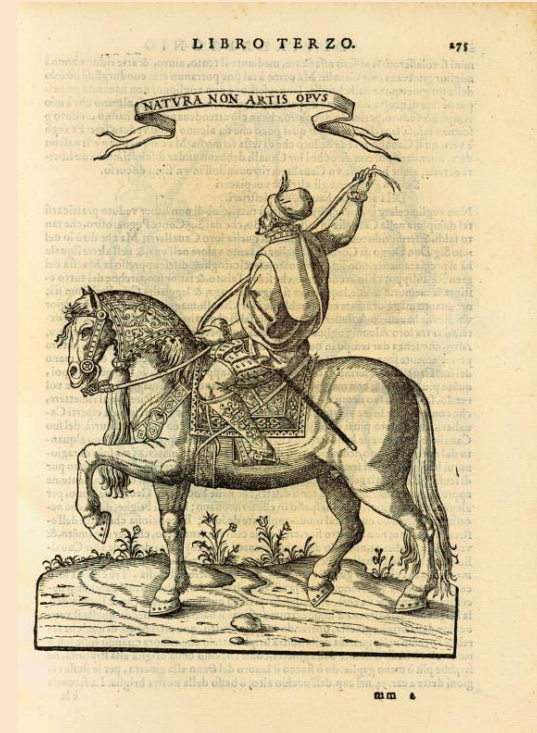


Belvedere Tournament, XVI cent., Museo di Roma

# Cavallo frenato

Pirro Antonio Ferraro c1580 pub posthumously 1602

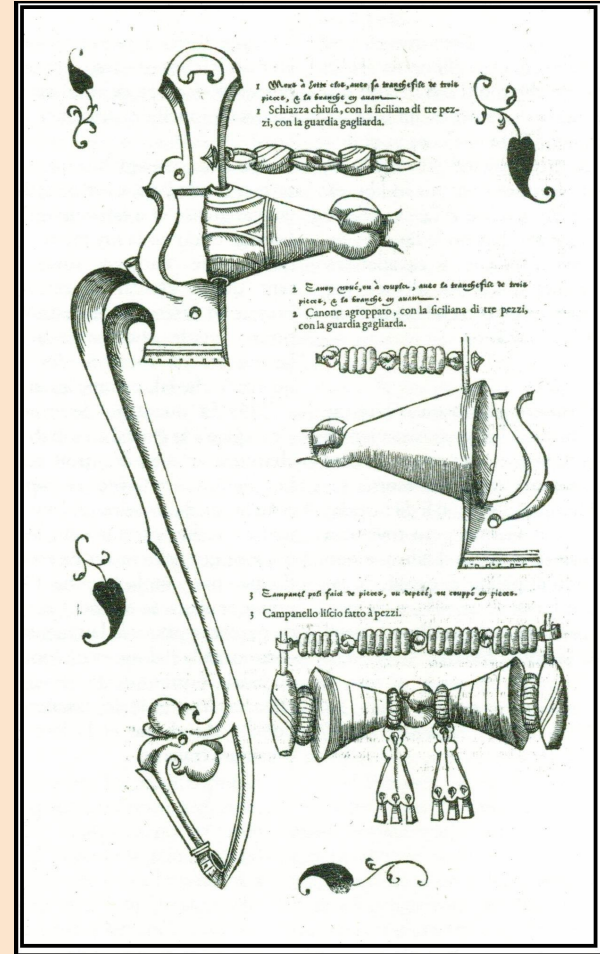
And I say this only because I dislike changing the bridle every day as is customary for many people in present times, who put some bridles in the horses' mouths, without knowing the reason. And this happens because **they are ignorant of the effect produced by each bridle and of the needs of the horse**, and if by chance they allege one of two good reasons, to them it sounds like much, but I say that **this is like a walk in darkness.**



# Escuirie de M. de Pavari

## Marco de Pavari 1581

And if you love this virtue I urge you to proceed with gentleness, which dominates everything, that if you will do the opposite you will not acquire anything **but the blame of the people who are worthy and expert.**



# ***Compendio dell'heroica arte di cavalleria*** **Alessandro Massari Malatesta 1599/1600**

whenever a Knight, both for his mistake or that of the horse, does not match with others in harmony, measures and order, not only causes discomfort, but great disorder: **nor in any place, time or action** (not talking of warfare) **the virtues held by a knight on horseback are more noticeable than in the Tournament.**

