

GERRIT NOORDZIJ:

[...big versals (not only and not specially capitals — Lombardic and other uncials should be included) could be ‘written’ with the same pen as the text by building them up with parallel strokes. With a small distance between the strokes the writer could effectively control the thickness of the [constructions]. Good manners wanted the white paths filled [...], but there were at least three good reasons to leave them

open: 1. Technique: The single layer of strokes took less moisture, with less warping of hygroscope vellum or parchment. There is less danger of cracking too. 2. Design: Additional decoration ‘naturally’ grows from separate strokes. And separate strokes maintain the connection between big versals and a small text hand. 3. Aesthetics: White trails look nice. (Raffia depends on this charm.)...]



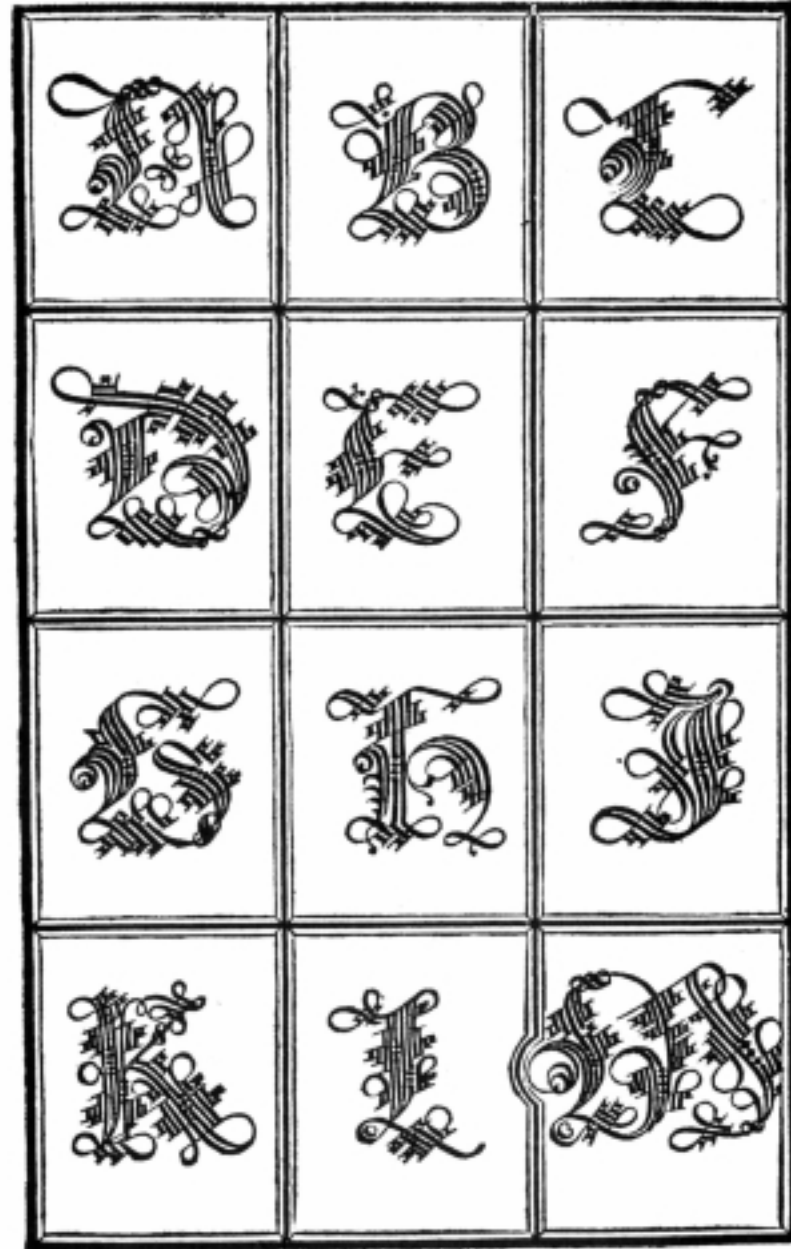
versals
'written' with
the same pen
as the text



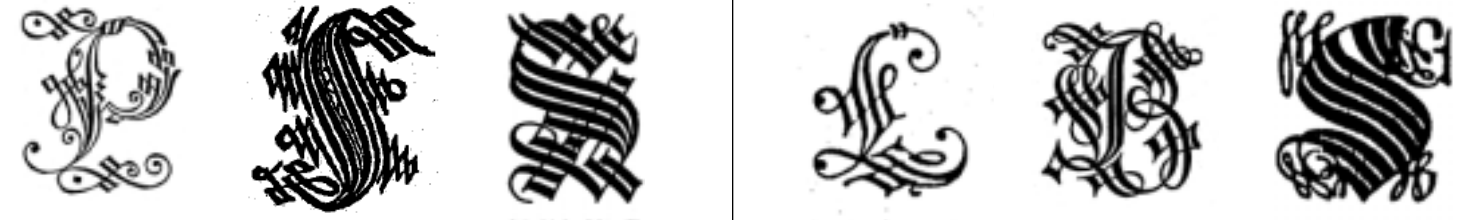
1. Leaf from an Antiphonal, manuscript on vellum, Spain, ca 1580 [Written]
4. Otto Hupp, Modern German Blackletter, ca 1900



writing masters
and printing
firms produced
entire alphabets
of these 'cadels'
or 'lettres
cadeaux'



1. Italian Gothic Initials. G. A. Tagliente, 16th century [also opposite]
2. Calligraphic alphabet of Vérard. [Wood] Grottesque removed.
3. Otto Hupp, Modern German Blackletter, ca 1900
4. Four-line Pica Ornamental Initials. Bought from the estate of William Silvius, 1582 [Metal]
5. Calligraphic initials from the Plantin printing firm in Antwerp [Metal]
6. The Alkmaar S.



raffia has affiliations with these letterforms, but deviates from the 'old-style' (and 'transitional') pattern of construction and elaboration.



lettres cadeaux / cadels / pen-drawn initials — 'old style' — the generic norm



'transitional — the Alkmaar S



'modern' — Raffia