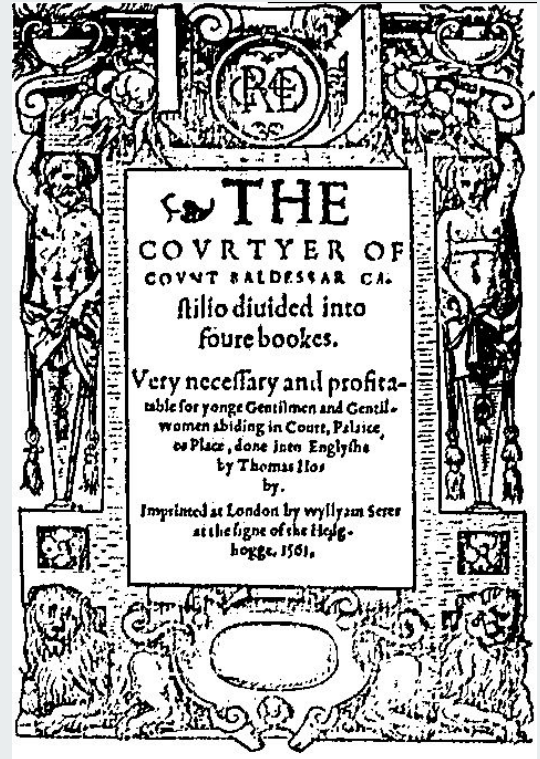


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**Scribal texts from a  
16th c source: *The  
Book of the Courtier*  
Bestseller of the renaissance**

**Count Baldassare Castiglione  
Sir Thomas Hoby, translator**





# Baldassare Castiglione, Count of Casatico 1478-1529

An Italian courtier, diplomat, soldier and a prominent Renaissance author.

Castiglione wrote *Il Cortegiano* or *The Book of the Courtier*, a courtesy book dealing with questions of the etiquette and morality of the courtier. It was very influential in 16th-century European court circles. [Wikipedia](#)

- top-flight education in Milan
- as (male) head of his family, he represents the marquess of Mantua
- moves to the court of Duke of Urbino, becomes ambassador of Urbino to the Papal court.  
Gets painted by Raphael
- doubles up as ambassador of the Holy See to Spain, meets HRE Charles V
- dies of plague 1529, one year after his book is published



# Thomas Hoby, renaissance-era translator, 1530-1566

English diplomat and translator [Wikipedia](#)

- well-connected nobleman of Elizabeth I's court
- well educated and knowledgeable in multiple languages - travelled, and wrote a travel autobiography
- appointed as ambassador of England to France - died in office
- translated *The Book of the Courtier* in 1561, becomes a smash hit in English-speaking countries
- the book is considered a recognized influence on Shakespeare



## What's in the book?

- "Epistolary": a book written as if it's a series of letters from Castiglione to a friend, describing a series of evening chats "...between an intimate circle of cultivated women, men of the world, scholars and buffoons" about the essential prerequisites for a gentleman
- it's part memoir of his happy days in the court of Urbino, and part aspirational claim about what courtiers **should** be like (vs reality)
- completely ignores the gross inequalities of life, and the risks and costs of war and combat
- **the hidden gem, for scribes:** the "lists" of virtues in Hoby's translation, of virtues of a courtier and of a waiting gentlewoman

<https://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/courtier/courtier.html>



## For scribal use: the "flowery bits" of a scroll text

Recipient virtues typically include:

- excellence at some activity: combat, crafts (particularly making an effort at clothing), helping out (service)
- being a nice person to spend time with, because they're pleasant, courteous, friendly, witty



## Anne of Wokyngham

From ye king & queen.... Having heard ye goodly reports of ye gentlewoman Anne of Wokyngham, to wit – being well-born and of a good house, accompanying sober and quiet manners with a livelie quicknesse of wit, beloved for her desertes, amiableness, and good grace, with no uncomelie behaviour, or enticement with wanton lookes, but with vertue and honest condicions. She hath done the exercises meete for women, comlye and with a good grace: dauncing well without over manie nimble footinges or too busie trickes, she hath the understandinge how to ordre her husbandes cloathing & substance & his household, and setting out her beaute and disposition of person with meete garments yt beste become her ye which she hath made after the facion of ye most, of some darkishe and sad colour not garish. Therefore that alle these facions, comely exercises & noble virtues may be commune to a greate many do we Vitus and Eleanora King & Queen of Drachenwald, award Anne of Wokyngham armes with Alle rights and priveleges apertaining thereto.



## Sela de la Rosa

... Having **heard** the goodly reports of the gentlewoman **Sela de la Rosa**, to wit – being well born, of a good house and well brought up, having the virtues of the mind, being learned and havinge a **sweetness in language** and a good uttrance to entertain all kind of men with communication worth the hearing, devisinge verses and poesie to the joy of the companie, she apparail herself so in meet garments that best become her, of some darkish and sad colour, not garish.

In our sight she hath made her self beloved for her deserts, amiableness, and good grace, not with any uncomely or dishonest behaviour, or flickering enticement with wanton looks, but with virtue and honest conditions. Therefore that all these fashions, skills & virtues may be commune to a great many we Nasr and Eleanor,...



## Elisande of der Welfengau

From their Majesties of Ealdormere good health & peace be upon all those to whom these presents come.

Among the good people of der Wulfengau, we hear of the gentle woman Elisande who serves our lands well. A scholar pursuing the liberal artes of trivium and quadrivium, she accompanies sober and quiet manners and honesty with a lively quickness of wit. She plays upon instruments for dancing; she does not use swift measures and busy points, but plays with sweetness for the pleasure of the company. She sets out her beauty and disposition of person with meet garments that shall best become her, and do apparail her self and her family moreso. Thus do we Baldric II and Brayla II, high king and queen of Ealdormere, do award Elisande arms with All rights and priveleges, that accompany this station. Done this II day of March AS LVIII at winter war.





## Fritz of der Welfengau

From the queen and her beloved king, to whom these presents show, good health & peace be upon you. Having heard the goodly reports of the gentleman Fritz, recently of der Wulfengau, to wit – being well born, having the virtues of the mind, well spoken and fair languaged. He plays well at fence and continues his studies in weapons of gentlemen. He has gained renown in these arts of defense within the kingdom and in foreign wars, which does please our hearts greatly.

He makes his garments after the fashion of the most, of some darkish and sad colour, not garish. In our sight he has made himself beloved for his amiableness and good grace. Therefore that all these fashions, skills & virtues may be common to a great many we high queen Brayla II and our beloved high king Baldric II do award Fritz arms with All rights and privileges, etc. Done this I day after Kalends of March AS LVIII at winter war in Trinovantia Nova.