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# GREAT REPRESENTATION OF THE ART AND OF THE USE OF FENCING



Maestro of the ... German Nation, Siena 1610

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**Part I**

**The Art**

# Chapter 1

## Of Fencing in general.

1) There is nothing in the world to which Nature, wise mistress and benign mother of the universe, with greater genius, and more sollicitudinous regard, than for the conservation of ones self provides him (of which Man is, more so than any other noble creature, demonstrating himself very dear of his safety), as the singular privilege of the hand, with which not only does he go procuring all things necessary for the sustenance of his life, but if he arms himself yet with the sword, noblest instrument of all, protects and defends himself, against any willful assault of inimical force; nonetheless following the strict rule of true valor, and of the art of fencing.

2) Hence if one would clearly discern how necessary to man, how useful, and honorable may be the said discipline, and how it is that to everyone it may be necessary, and good to them, and maximally in demand, those armed of singular valor are inclined to the noble profession of the military, to which this science is subordinate in the guise of an alternative or subservient discipline, as is the part to the whole, and the end of the middle is subject to the final end.

3) The aim of fencing/protection 'scherma' is the defense of self, from whence it derives its name; because to fence 'schermire' does not mean other than defending oneself, hence it is that fencing and defense are words of the same meaning; hence one recognizes the value and the excellence of this discipline is such that everyone must give as much care thereunto, as they love their own life, and the security of their native land, being obligated to spend that lovingly and valorously in the service thereof.

4) Thence it is yet seen that defense is the principal action in fencing, and that no one must proceed to offense, if not by way of legitimate defense.

5) The effective causes of this discipline are four. Reason, nature, art, and practice. Reason, as orderer of nature. Nature, as potent virtue. Art, as regulator and moderator of nature. Practice, as minister of art.

6) Reason orders nature, and the human body in fencing, is its defense, in reason is considered judgment and volition. Judgment discerns and understands that which must be done for its defense. Volition inclines and stimulates one to the preservation of self.

7) In the body, which in the guise of servant executes the commandments of reason, is to be considered in the body proper greatness: in the eyes the vitality, and in the legs, in the body, and in the arms, the agility, vigor, and quickness.

8) Nature orders and prepares matter, is the sketch, is the accommodation to such extent in order to contain the final form and perfection of art.

9) Art regulates nature, and with more secure escort guides us according to the infallible truth, and by the ordinance of its precepts to the true science of our defense.

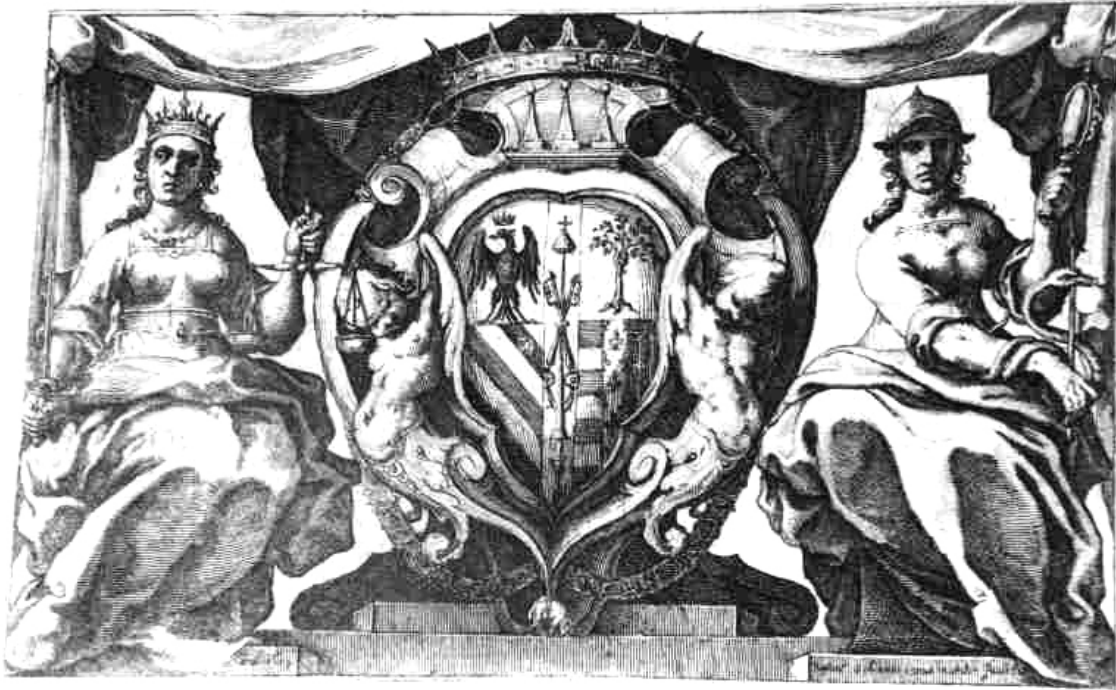
10) Practice conserves, augments, stabilizes the strength of art, of nature, and more so than science, begets in us the prudence of many details.

11) Art regards nature and sees that owing to the small capacity of matter, it cannot do all that which it intends to do, and however considers in many details its perfections and imperfections, and in the guise of architect takes thereof and makes such a beautiful model that it is thus refined, and sharpens the rough-hewn things of nature, reducing them little by little to the height of their perfection.

12) From nature art has undertaken in defending oneself the ordinary step, the third guard for resting in defense, and the second and fourth for offense, the tempo, or the measure, and the manner as well of the placement of the body, with the torso now placed above the left leg for self-defense, now thrown forward and carried on the right leg in order to offend.

13) Because without doubt the first offenses were those of the fists, in the making of them is seen the ordinary step. The third, the second, and fourth, it is yet seen, that many do the punch mostly in tempo and measure.

14) Against this offense of the fist, of course was found the art of the stick, and this defense not yet sufficing, iron; I believe it is, that of this material were made little by little many diverse weapons, but always one more perfect than all others, owing to the multiplicity of its offenses, to wit that the sword was discovered, the perfect weapon, and proportioned to the proper distance, in which mortals naturally can defend themselves.



15) The weapons which are of length exceeding the distance of natural defense and offense are discommodious and abhorrent for use in civic converse, and the excessively short ones are insidious and with danger to life; owing to which, in republics founded upon justice of good laws, and of good customs, it always was, and is, prohibited to carry arms of which can be born treacherous and heedless homicides. On the contrary, in the ancient Roman republic, the true ideal of a good government, the use of arms was entirely prohibited, and to no one, however noble and great that there was, was it licit to carry a sword or other weapon, except in war, and those who in time of peace were discovered with arms, were proceeded against as against murderers.

16) And the Roman soldiers, immediately upon arriving home, put down their arms together with their short uniforms, and soldiery, and assumed again their long civil robes, and attended to the studies and the arts of peace, because no Roman exercised the body (as says Salustio) without the brain, each one attending beyond the studies of war, to each office of peace, therefore desirous, the burden of war, themselves supported, and yet immediately upon the end of war, they heard no more of captain, of soldier, nor of military wages.

17) In these times soldiers are a greater burden to Princes and to Lords, and more so to the populace in times of peace than in war, and because they are not trained in other studies than those of war, they hate peace, and much of the time they are the authors of turbulence and wretched counsel.

18) But turning to our matter, I say that the sword is the most useful and just arm, because it is proportioned to the distance in which offense is naturally made, and all arms, as much more as they differ from this distance of natural defense and offense, so much more are they bestial, more adverse to nature, and but useless to civic converse; one is the way of virtue, and of true reason, and that other one burdensome and rough, from which nature never departs; to sin and ignorance, one runs to and fro and glides by many routes; one is the straight line, which the other does not know to do; if not, the artifice, the oblique lines, are infinite, and they can make each one.

19) From the force of nature, art, and practice, as efficient causes of the defense of which, up until now we have treated, is born the advantage and disadvantage of arms, but principally derives from the just height of body and from the length of the sword; because a man, large of frame, and that carries a sword proportioned to his body, without doubt will come first to the measure. In regard of this, in order to compensate for the natural imperfections of those who are found to be inferior of height, I believe, that it is prohibited in certain lands to make the blade of a sword longer than another, which does not seem a just thing, that one, who is through nature superior, loses advantage still from art, necessitating to him to suffice the privilege of nature, which without manifest indignity, wanting to equalize him with the smaller, not able to take away from him in general, with bestowing a sword less long to him, than to those who are short, who by chance

could have other advantages of art and of practice, which exceed those of nature, in which cases human prudence is not sufficient to provide impartial things.

20) The art of fencing is most ancient, and was discovered in the times of Nino, King of the Assyrians, who, through use of the advantage of arms, was made monarch and patron of the world; from the Assyrians the monarchy passed to the Persians; the praise of this practice, through the valor of Ciro, from the Persians, came to the Macedonians, from these to the Greeks, from the Greeks it was fixed in the Romans, who (as testifies Vegetius) delivered in the field masters of fencing, whom they named Campi doctores, vel doctores which is to say, guides, or masters of the field, and these taught the soldiers the strikes of the point and of the edge against a pole. Nowadays we Italians equally carry the boast in the art of fencing, although more in the schools than in the field, and in the use of the militia, considering that in these times war is made more with artillery, and with the arquebus, than with the sword, which moreover almost will not serve in order to secure victory.

21) This discipline is art, and is not science, taking that is, the word science in its strictest sense, because it does not deal with things eternal, and divine, and that surpass the force of human will, but it is art, not done from manuals, but rather active, and serves very closely the civil science; because its effects pass together with its operation, in the guise of virtue, and being passed, they do not leave any chance of labor or of manufacture, as are employed in performing the plebian and mechanical arts, all of which, although some of them are celebrated with the name of nobility, at great length it surpasses and exceeds.

22) The material of fencing is the precepts of defending oneself well with the sword; its form, and the order is the truth of its rule, always true and infallible.

23) But it is time at last, that gathering all up, which heretofore we have said in brief words, we come to lay the foundation of this discipline, which is its true and proper definition, following the rule from which we will guide and direct the rest of all its precepts.

## Chapter 2

# The definition of fencing, and its explanation.

24) Fencing is an art of defending oneself well with a sword.

25) An art, because it is an assembly of perpetually true and well-ordained precepts, useful to civil converse.

26) The truth is a disposition of precepts of fence; it must not be measured following the ignorance of some, who teach and write owing to the long use of arms that they have; and not owing to knowledge, but rather more often they make of shadow, substance; and of chance, reason; mixing gourds with lanterns, and polevaulting in shrubbery; but one must esteem those who constrain themselves to the truth of its nature.

27) Their utility is manifest, because they teach the mode of defense, that is very naturally just, and honest, and that can not be doubted to be of the greatest utility that it delivers to human life, because daily they discern it manifestly in its effects. For as much as that the sword is a commodious weapon to defend oneself in just distance, in which one and the other can naturally offend, we see that the combatants, almost always resting in the defense, rarely come to the offense, which is the last remedy for saving their life, which they would not have, if the arms were disproportionate, that is, either greater or lesser than the natural defense looks for.

28) The aim which separates fencing from all other sciences, is to defend oneself well, however with the sword.

## Chapter 3

# The division of fencing that is posed in the knowledge of the sword.

29) There are two parts to fencing, the knowledge of the sword, and its handling. The knowledge of the sword is the first part of fencing, that teaches to know the sword to the end to handle it well.

30) The sword therefore is a pointed arm of iron, and apt to defend oneself in distance, in which one and the other can naturally and with danger of body offend.

31) The material of the sword is the iron material of defense; without doubt it is found against that of wood it suffices little to beat aside, and disdain the injury, that one does daily to another.

32) Its exterior form is that it is pointed; because if it were blunt, it would not serve to hold the adversary at the distance of natural offense.

33) Its purpose is chiefly that of defense, which signifies chiefly to hold the adversary at a distance such that he cannot offend me, which sort of defense, and natural limits, enabling it to put into action, without injury of my fellow man. And in the Latin tongue, as it is already heard said with grammatical certainty, defend does not mean other than avoid, or truly to distance oneself from a thing that can harm, if one comes too near thereunto.

34) Hence the words to defend signify to offend, and strike, which is the ultimate and subsidiary remedy of defense, in case the enemy should pass the boundary of the first defense, and advance himself near to such extent, that I came in danger of coming to harm from him, were I not to take heed for myself; because of the fact, that the enemy crosses the boundaries of defense, entering into those of offense, I am no longer obligated to carry any respect for the conservation of his life, as he comes to my turn, with some arm, commodious to harm me, naturally indeed, as I say in the distance of being able to arrive to me.

35) The purpose of the sword, which is to defend oneself in the said distance, is measured in its length.

36) Therefore the sword has as much for its length as twice that of the arm, and as much as my extraordinary step, which length corresponds equally to that which is from the placement of my foot, as far as it is beneath the armpit.

37) There are two parts to the sword: the forte, and the debole. The forte begins from the hilt, extending as far as the middle of the blade; and the remainder is called the debole. The forte is for parrying, and the debole for striking.

38) The edge is false, and true. The true is that which faces downward when the hand rests in its natural position, which, turning itself out, or from inside, outwards from its natural orientation, makes the false edge. The first orientation, that is, of the true edge, is to be recognized in third, which is the position of the sword in guard, and the other, that is, of the false edge, will appear manifested in the position of third, and second, which are orientations of the sword, not in guard, but in striking.

39) I divide only the debole into the true and false edges, and not the forte, because the consideration does not occur that is made in the forte, which serves no other purpose than to parry, and were it without edge, and dulled, it would not be at all amiss, in place of point in the forte and the hilt, not only for gripping the sword, but also for covering oneself and chiefly the head in striking.



## Chapter 4

# On Measure

40) Up until now we have discussed the first part of fencing, which consists of the knowledge of the sword; now we commence to treat of the second part, which is that of its handling.

41) The handling of the sword is the second part of fencing, which shows the way of handling the sword, and is distributed among the preparation of the defense, and in the same defense, the preparation, and, in the first part of the handling of the sword, that places the combatants in just distance, and in convenient posture of body in order to defend themselves in tempo; and has two parts; in the first is discussed measure and tempo.

42) In the second is treated of the disposition of the limbs of the body.

43) Measure is taken for a certain distance from one end to the other, as for example in the art of fencing is taken for the distance that runs from the point of my sword to the body of the adversary, which is wide or narrow. From then it is taken for an apt thing to measure the said distance, which in the use of fencing is the natural braccio 'i.e. arm length', which measures all distances, which in the exercise of this art, has all the qualities, and conditions, that are expected of an accomplished measure.

44) The measure is a just distance, from the point of my sword to the body of my adversary, in which I can strike him, according to which, is to be directed all the actions of my sword, and defense.

45) The narrow measure is of the foot, or of the right arm; the measure of the foot is of the fixed foot, or of the increased foot.

46) The wide measure is, when with the increase of the right foot, I can strike the adversary, and this measure is that before the narrow.

47) The narrow fixed foot measure is that in which only pushing the body and leg forward, I can strike the adversary.

48) The narrowest measure is when the adversary strikes at wide measure, and I can strike him in the advanced and uncovered arm, either that of the dagger or that of the sword, with my left foot back, followed by the right while striking.

49) The first wide measure is of a tempo and a half, the second is of a whole tempo, the third is of a half tempo, regarding the three distances, which according to their size require more or less speed of tempo, and this is enough to have said of measure. Following now is the doctrine of tempo.

## Chapter 5

# Of Tempo.

50) The word tempo in fencing comes to signify three different things; chiefly it signifies a just length of motion or of stillness that I need to reach a definite end for some plan of mine, without considering the length or shortness of that tempo, only that I finally arrive at that end. As in the art of fencing in order to come to measure, I need a certain and just tempo of motion and of stillness, it doesn't matter whether I arrive there either early or late, provided that I reach the desired place. We pose the example that I move myself to look for the measure, and that I go very slowly to find it, and that my adversary is so much fixed of body that I find it, although I have arrived somewhat late, nonetheless not at all can it jeopardize my plan; because I have arrived in tempo, considering that, as much length of time as I am myself in motion, precisely so much had my adversary fixed himself; thus my motion equals the tempo of the stillness of my adversary, and his stillness measures my motion precisely, and because in remaining in guard, and searching for the measure, is only to be considered the correspondence of the tempo, that the combatants in moving themselves, and in fixing themselves, mutually consume, that they arrive to a certain point of measure; according to this, in the said actions, the speed of the motion, and the shortness of the stillness do not come into consideration, but rather through taking the just measure, it is more useful that they go, as is often said, with a leaden sandal, with the weight counterpoised, and placed over the left leg in ordinary pace, a posture of body most apt for coming with consideration and with respect to apprehend the due measure.

51) Next this word tempo is taken in the sense of quickness, in respect of the length or brevity of the motion or of the stillness. Thus in the art of fencing there are three distances, and different measures of striking, and through this again are found three distinct tempos, and here it is not wished to consider only that one comes to a certain end, but that one arrives also with a certain quickness and velocity, because the wide measure, that is, of the increased foot, requires a tempo, that is, a severing of stillness, either of movement of the sword, or of the bodies of the combatants, fairly brief, but not so brief as the narrow measure of the fixed foot; and the narrowest measure requires a fastest tempo, because each little bit that I move myself with the point of my sword, and each little bit that my adversary fixes himself, in the distance of narrowest measure, suffices me to effect my plan, because this tempo is briefest; however we will call it half a tempo, and consequently the tempo that is spent in striking from the less narrow measure of the fixed foot will come to make a whole tempo, and the last tempo, which is employed in striking from wide measure, which is of the increased foot, will be a tempo and a half.

52) In the first tempo, which is that of seeking the wide measure, one does not consider the quickness of the motion and of the stillness, nor is it necessary to measure it by half of a whole tempo, which manners of tempos are only to be regarded in striking. By which thing the posture of the body in the striking is entirely contrary to that which is observed in seeking the narrow measure; because the first posture is comfortable for going little by little to find the narrow measure, and the other is bold, and with speed one hurls oneself to strike.

53) The tempo is not other than the measure of the stillness and of the motion; the stillness of the point of my sword measures the motion of the body of my adversary, and the motion of my adversary with his body measures the stillness of the point of my sword. Now, so that this tempo may be just, it is necessary that as much length of tempo as the body of my adversary is fixed, so much is the point of my sword moved, and thus, consequently, for example: I find myself in wide measure, with a will to come to narrow measure; now I move the point of my sword to come to the said terminus; meanwhile as I move myself it is necessary that my adversary fix his body, and thus the stillness of body of my adversary is the measurement of the point of my sword; and, however, if I moved myself to strike before my adversary finished fixing himself, because the tempo would be unequal, I would move myself in vain, or not without great danger to myself. We pose the case, that both of us move ourselves to find the measure, and the one and the other give each other to intend to have found it; both going to invest themselves, intervene so that the one and the other don't hit, because the tempo in which they move themselves to strike won't be just, in respect of the distance to which they must first arrive; in this example it is seen that the motion of my point measures the motion of the body of my adversary, and the motion of the point of my adversary measures the motion of my body. However in the times to come, many strike each other in contra tempo, having come at the same time to narrow measure.

- 54) The tempo that has to be considered in wide measure requires patience, and that of the narrow measure, quickness in striking and in exiting.
- 55) The tempo of the narrow measure is lost either through shortcoming of nature, or through defect of art and of practice.
- 56) Through shortcoming of nature, by too much slowness of the legs, of the arm, and of the body, which derives either from weakness or from too much bodily weight, as we see to come to men who are either too fat or too thin.
- 57) Through defect of art, when one does not learn to find the narrow measure as is necessary, with weight carried on the left leg, with the ordinary pace, and with the right arm extended, because the things must move in company in order to produce one single effect, yet they have to move in a just distance; but if the point of the sword is very advanced and the leg back, or if the leg is advanced and the arm back, then the sword will never be carried with that promptness, justness, and speed, which is required; by which, those who come to find the narrow measure in disproportionate distance of limbs, although they arrive there, nonetheless they cannot be in tempo of striking, because they would lack the best tempo of the narrow measure, which is that of prompt justness, or quickness.
- 58) Through lack of practice, tempo is lost for the reason that the body is not yet well loose of limb, or when the scholars acquire some wretched habit, going back to the vanities of feints, and disengages, and counterdisengages, and similar things thus done.
- 59) From this, which we have so far said, everyone will easily be able to understand to be falsest that which many say, that tempo is taken solely from the movement that my adversary makes with his body and sword; but it is necessary to have equal regard for my own motion, and not only to my motion and that of the adversary, but as well to our stillnesses; because tempo is not solely a measure of motion, but of motion and stillness.
- 60) And concluding this matter of tempo, I say that every motion and every stillness of mine and of my adversary make together a tempo, to such extent, that one and the other measures.

## Chapter 6

# Of the body, and chiefly of the head.

61) The head truly is the chief thing in this exercise; it lies indeed in its due place, because it is that which recognizes measure and tempo, hence it is necessary that it comes to be deployed in that place where it can serve as the sentinel, and reveal the land from every side.

62) The placement of the head, which lies in guard, and in seeking the measure, up to now is just and convenient when together with the sword it makes one straight line; because in this manner the eyes see all the stillnesses and movements of the sword and of the body of the adversary, and will recognize immediately the parts that they must offend and defend; the head being posted on the said parts, is nonetheless able to cast all the visual rays in a straight line, which they could not do if the head were borne higher or lower, so that its visual rays could not radiate from every side, and thus they would not be quick to seize or flee the tempo.

63) In lying in guard and in seeking the measure, the head reposes itself upon the left shoulder, and in striking it leans upon the right shoulder.

64) In lying in guard and in seeking the measure, the head has to retire as much as is possible, and in striking one wishes to propel it forward as much as one can.

65) In striking, the head will take care to be somewhat more to one side than to the other, according to whether one will strike to the inside or the outside, thus it will be covered by the hilt and the sword arm.

66) Other placements and movements of the head which are made in passing, in fleeing, and in moving the body out of the way in diverse sorts of guards, and in infinite means of striking, cannot be accepted as good ones, because they deviate from the straight line, which is called by me that which divides my body through the flank together with that of the adversary, as on the contrary the oblique line I name that which runs outside my body or that of my adversary, of one party as of the other, following the rule by which all of the play of fencing has to be that of measuring.

## Chapter 7

### Of the body.

67) In resting in guard and in seeking the measure, the body needs to be bent, and slopes to the rear, such that the angle which it makes with the right thigh is barely visible, and with the left thigh it comes to make an obtuse angle, so that the left shoulder is in line with the line of the left foot, and the right shoulder evenly passes through the middle of the pace of the guard.

68) In striking the body propels itself forward, so that the right thigh forms an obtuse angle with the body, and the point of the shoulder is in line with the point of the right foot, and the left thigh and calf carry themselves forward on the diagonal in an oblique line, extended to such a degree that the left shoulder divides the pace that is made through the middle.

69) And when one goes to strike, the body needs to be pushed forward in a straight line, so that the diversity of striking, outside and inside, leaning somewhat more to one than to the other side, will deviate the least from the straight line.

70) The objective of why the body should be thus angled, and this is of prime importance, is because in this way the parts which can be offended are more distanced, and more covered, and better guarded, and defended; because the more distant a target is, the more difficult it is to strike it; thus in striking the blows are carried longer, faster, and more vigorously, thus as much further away do the offenses originate, to such a degree are they safer and better.

71) In addition to the bending of the body and of its form, which it takes in putting oneself in guard, in seeking the measure, and in striking, is to be considered similarly its concealment, which diminishes its length, as the bend diminishes and contracts its height.

72) The concealment of the body needs to be such that no more is shown than the middle of the breast, not only in fixing oneself in guard, and in seeking the measure, but also in striking, because as much less of the breast is shown, so much more one goes and strikes in a straight line, and as much more is uncovered, so much more of measure and of tempo is lost.

73) They who like the guards, and counterguards, and stringering, here, there, above, and below, the feints, and counterfeints, the slope paces, the voids of the legs, and the crossings, necessarily form and move their bodies in many strange ways; which, as things done by chance and that were founded in no reasons that are sound and true, we will leave to their authors.

## Chapter 8

### Of the arms.

74) In resting in guard and in seeking the measure, the right arm must rest somewhat bent, so that its upper part is stretched in an oblique line, so low that the elbow meets the bend of the body, and is in line with the right knee; and its lower part, withdrawn somewhat, forms together with the sword a straight line.

75) In resting in guard and in seeking the measure, the left arm together with the left thigh and calf have to serve as the counterweight of the body and the right leg; and the upper arm needs to be extended, so that it is in line with the left knee, and meets the bend of the left flank; and its forearm needs to be somewhat tucked in to oneself, in order by its motion to help to propel the body forward in striking, which it would not be able to do were it allowed to fall.

76) In striking, the right arm needs to be extended in a straight line, turning the lower part of the hand and of the arm up, sometimes in, sometimes out, depending on from which side one strikes.

77) In striking, the left arm needs to be so extended that it makes a straight line with the right arm, turning it according to whether one strikes outside or inside; because each iota that one carries the arm forward, or that one fixes it in an oblique line, would significantly diminish the measure, and the quickness of the tempo.

78) The sword is regarded entirely as one limb with the arm, and it has to form a straight line with the forearm, which is properly aligned with the fold of the right flank, and has to divide the height and width of the body into two equal parts, because in resting in guard and seeking the measure, the reason why it will have to return properly to the fold of the flank is this: that every time that it is in this place, it will be quickest to come to the aid of all the parts that can be offended, being that the upper parts, that is, those from the top of the head down to the fold of the flank, are of a measure with the parts beneath from the fold of the flank down to the knee; and it doesn't happen that one has to regard the calf, which being in the natural distance of the offense of the increased feet, can not be offended without excessively leading ones body forward into manifest peril.

79) The location and posture of the sword in striking is entirely one with that of its arm, turning the false edge up in striking, according to whether it strikes from the outside or inside.

80) Take heed diligently that the point of your sword always is aimed at the uncovered parts of the enemy, which are those of the right flank and right thigh, and one must not let anybody divert one from this intention through uncovering of the left parts, which is fallacious measure and tempo, being that it may be plucked back in an instant, which doesn't occur with the right parts, which necessarily are made targets.

81) It is not good to rest in guard with the arm crouched in, because it does not cover the measure well in which I find myself; it is equally not good for seeking the measure, because the point of the sword is too far from the body of the adversary. Hence one cannot take the proper measure, thereby lacking the ability to strike in tempo; in addition to this, the arm thus retired does not have separation from the adversary of just distance, wherein he can strike me, and thus it does not do its duty. Through which the sword is chiefly found thus to not be useful in striking, because it will not be able to strike in the measure of the increased foot, which resting with its point so far from the adversary, it cannot properly take the said measure, which is so much more excellent than the narrower measures, as it is to strike the enemy from afar than from near. Furthermore it is not good for launching the blow, which together with the arm is discharged by the pressure that makes the body advance, and it is not true that the stretching out of the arm increases the measure, but rather it is done well with the stretching of the body and of the forward pace, because the weight of the forward leg and the body, while extending the arm with the sword, is poised over the left leg, on which is supported the entire body and right leg; which left leg during the launching throws the body and the thigh forward onto the right leg, which mutually form a pillar and buttress, sustaining all of the weight of the body, inclined forward to launch the blow.

82) I cannot approve of having the arm fully extended in guard and finding the measure, because it forces the sword out of the place which is proper and commodious to defend ones own life, and to offend that of the adversary; and in striking it does not aid the body in launching the blow, and carries it with less vigor; other locations, and movements of the arm, are not desired in the play of striking in the straight line.

## Chapter 9

# Of the thighs, calves, of the feet, and of the pace.

83) In resting in guard and in finding the narrow measure, the right calf with the thigh and its foot, point directly forward, and lean back in an oblique line, in the manner of a slope, and the left calf with the thigh and its foot point straight toward your left side, with the knee bent as far as a possible, so that the part inside the knee faces the point of the right knee.

84) In striking, the knee of the right leg is bent so far as it can, so that the calf and the thigh come to make an extremely acute angle; and on the contrary, the left calf with its thigh is extended forward in an oblique line in the manner of a slope.

85) The pace is a just distance between the legs, as much in fixing as in moving oneself, a point for placing oneself in guard for seeking the measure, and to strike; in regard of distance, the pace is either entirely narrow, or a half pace, or a just pace, or extraordinary.

86) In the use of fencing, I know of no pace so good as the ordinary, in which the body rests commodiously and carried well in guard, for seeking the narrow measure with a little increase of pace; as wanting to seek it with smaller paces, the narrow foundation is weak; it would not support the weight of the body, and would disconcert one, if not little by little, but with paces and half paces one seeks the measure, and losing the tempo, would not discharge the blow with so much speed, and if they are indeed the said good paces, they will serve outside of the measure for walking, and placing oneself in guard, and for returning into it.

87) The pace of fencing, we will, for better understanding, name military, or soldierly, dividing it into the ordinary and the extraordinary. The ordinary is that in which one rests in guard and seeks the narrow measure. And the extraordinary is that in which one moves, lengthening the pace forward to strike.

88) The pace, regarding its position, is to be considered in more ways, forward, back, sideways, and diagonally, and this with the legs crossed or not, equally whether a single leg is moved or both, and whether the legs are moved to make an entire pace, either to diminish it or to change its position in order to allow the body to retreat or evade.

89) It appears to me, that there are not but two main ways of fixing and moving oneself with respect to the legs. The first way is that in which one appears in guard, and seeking the narrow measure, or avoiding it; the other serves for striking.

90) I do not know that stepping sideways serves other than to make a good show, and display animosity, and to scout out the strength of the adversary; when somebody goes to put himself in guard in this fashion of stepping, you will be able to avail yourself of all the narrow and just paces, although in my judgment in this the ordinary pace still carries the boast.

91) Nonetheless there are those that avail themselves of this stepping to the side when the adversary is poised on an oblique line with the sword in order to stringer him on the outside, but to me it seems that it would be a more expeditious way to seek the narrow measure immediately by the straight line, which follows from the rule of the play thereof. Still, there are those who avail themselves thereof through fading back of the body, while their adversary comes to strike them encountering him in fourth, and in second, either from outside or inside, according to the occasion, but so would they be able to encounter him, having in consideration the tempo and the measure of fourth and of second in the straight line, without traversing their legs.

92) The crossing of the left foot toward the right side in performing an in quartata is worthless; it causes a shortcoming, because it hinders the body and shortens the motion of the right arm in striking, with loss of tempo; the void of the right leg toward the left side from the adversary in order to perform an in quartata is equally a thing done by chance, and sooner serves for an amicable assault than for the trial or dispute.

93) The passatas are not good, because they lose measure and tempo, because while one is moving the left leg, at the same time the torso, and the right leg, and the sword arm, cannot move to strike with due speed, nor without danger of risposta.

94) Retreats are necessary principally in striking, because in the act of striking I necessarily uncover my body, yet as I fix myself too much it could easily occur that my adversary could make a response to me.

## Chapter 10

### Of defense, of the guard.

95) Up until now we have dealt of the first part of the handling of the sword, in which was taught to us the just distance, and the true position of all the members of the body, which are required for defense; now we will speak of that very same defense.

96) Defense is the second part of handling of the sword, which trains us to employ the sword for our defense, and has two parts, of which the first is the defensive, or guard, as we wish to call it, and the other is the offensive.

97) The guard is a position of the arm and of the sword extended in a straight line in the middle of the offendable parts, with the body well accommodated to its ordinary pace in order to hold the enemy at a distance from any offense, and in order to offend him in case he approaches to endanger you.

98) The third then is exclusively a guard, not indeed posed with the hilt outside the knee, but so that it properly divides the body though the middle, neither high nor low, but just in the middle of the parts that cannot be covered, through being equally prompt and near to all of their offenses and defenses.

99) The first and the second are not guards, because they are not apt for seeking the measure, and uncover too much of the body that can be offended and defended; the fourth equally shows too much of the body; it is a way of striking, and not of guarding oneself.

100) There are three reasons which make it difficult to hit the mark, namely: the distance to the target; because it is concealed, so that one is at pains to see through the impediment of the things that veil it; and even if it is uncovered, as the danger of the blow approaches, in a moment it is possible to cover it.

101) All of these virtues are contained in our guard; because it greatly distances the target and removes so much of it, that by means of the fold and concealment of the body, most of the parts that cannot be concealed can be excellently covered; one is quick to succor them, being in equal distance, and thus walks safely to take well the tempo and measure, which thing is the ultimate perfection of the guard.

102) Of changing ones guard, in guard, to me is not legitimate to speak, it not being good, if not a single guard.

103) Offense is a defense in which I seek the measure and strike my adversary.



## Chapter 11

# On the way of seeking the measure.

104) There are two arts to offense: seeking the measure, and striking.

105) Seeking the measure is an offense in which, in the said guard, I seek the narrow measure in order to strike.

106) There are three ways of seeking the measure; because I seek it, either while I move and the adversary fixes himself, or when I fix myself and the adversary moves, or when I move and the adversary moves.

107) The tempo of these actions needs to be just, and equal to the final boundaries of the wide measure, upon which the tempo of seeking the measure expires, and gives rise to the tempo of another action, which is that of striking.

108) In order that this tempo may be just, it is necessary that you have patience up until you arrive at the said distance, and move yourself earlier to strike.

109) For example: I fix myself in guard to seek the measure, my adversary already being entered into the boundaries of offense; meanwhile, as he either seeks the measure, or pretends to strike me, he walks with his sword, it is necessary that I fix myself as much with the point of my sword, so that he arrives to the end of the wide measure, and I not move myself to strike earlier. Because in this action his motion has to measure my stillness, and my stillness his motion, and if I had moved myself from my stillness before he had come to the edge of the wide measure, the tempo would not be just, and I would not have sought the measure well; and in conclusion this motion and stillness are equal; so that one arrives to the principle that the narrow measure is one tempo, and it does not occur, however, as quick as it may be, that it may be equal and correspondent to the final terminus of the wide measure, and thus the end of the tempo of the wide measure is the beginning of the tempo of striking.

110) Many in seeking the narrow measure make disengages and counterdisengages, feints and counterfeints, stringer a palmo 'a unit of measure variously from a palms width up to 10 inches' and more of the sword, and step from every side, and twist their bodies and stretch them, and retreat in many eccentric fashions, which are things done outside of true reasons, and found through beguiling the doltish, and make the play difficult; nonetheless stringering of the sword, when I cannot do otherwise, seeking the measure in my guard, it is only necessary that I stringer the debole of my enemys sword in a straight line, with the forte of mine, and this riding it without touching, but only in striking to hit with my forte the debole of the enemys sword, from the inside or the outside according to the circumstances of the striking.

111) To disengage, although good, is good in the situation in which the adversary has constrained me and removed me from the straight line; in that case it would be licit, indeed necessary, to retreat, disengaging with a little ceding of my body or feet, replacing myself immediately into the straight line in order to seek the measure; because disengaging is done against stringering, and as stringering is done while moving the sword forward, thus must the disengage be done while retiring it.

## Chapter 12

### Of striking.

112) Striking is the final offensive action of fencing, in which, having arrived at the narrow measure, I move myself, with my body, with my legs, and with my arms, all in one tempo thrown forward to be better able to strike my adversary, and this is done with the feet fixed or with the increase of the pace, according to the magnitude of the narrow measure, according to whether it comes to be more commodious for me to take more of one than of the other measure; because if through my tardiness, or through the fury of my adversary, the first measure vanishes, then I could avail myself of the second, striking with fixed feet, which in this case doesnt happen, that greatly speeding the pace, with the bending only of the right knee, it does not behoove me to seek the narrower measure, so that I had time to increase the pace.

113) Striking is done in three ways; because I can strike my adversary while I am fixed and he moves to seek the measure or to strike me; or while he is fixed and I move in order to seek the measure; or because both of us move ourselves to seek the measure and to strike; only this is the difference, that when he moves to strike me, I strike him with fixed feet, because when he moves through the said effect, I can poorly take the just measure to strike him with the increase of pace; on the contrary it is necessary that I cling to the narrower measure, and when he moves to seek the measure I strike him with the increase of pace.

114) In consideration of the parts of the body with respect to the sword, I strike either from the inside or outside; from inside from fourth, and from outside from second, high or low according to the exposed parts of the body of the adversary, that he gives me measure, with respect to the point of my sword.

115) Meanwhile, as I strike, I necessarily parry together, inasmuch that I strike in the straight line, and with my body in its due disposition, because when I strike in this manner, in tempo, and at measure, the adversary will never hit me, neither with point nor edge, because the forte of my sword goes in a straight line, and comes to cover all of my body.

116) The edge is of little moment, because I cannot strike with the edge in the said distance of the narrow measure, without entirely uncovering myself and giving the measure and tempo to my adversary to strike me, because of the compass of the arm and of the sword which I make, and although some usefulness is found in the cut, nonetheless in the same measure in the very same tempo more can be shown in the thrust.

117) But without a trace of doubt, on horseback it is better to strike with the cut than the thrust, because my legs are carried by anothers, and thus I am not commodious to seek the measure and the tempo, which are apt for propelling forward the body and the arm, but it is indeed true that I can wheel my arm about to my satisfaction, which is a proper motion to strike with the edge.

## Chapter 13

### Of the dagger.

118) Of the dagger it will suffice us in this brief chapter to record only that it has been found better for saving oneself, in case the adversary, while I throw a blow without attending to the parrying, threw one at me where it turned more commodious to him, than for one to be unable to employ the dagger in order to avert the risposta. And as all commodious things delivered carry along some incommodious ones, still thus did it happen to the play of the dagger, which one cannot employ without uncovering somewhat more of the body, and shortening a little the line while striking. This is the end of the dagger, but the art is deviated thereby from its chief aim, given to it as it is done with the sword, various effects which may be better put into action with the single sword, without going on further at such length.

**Part II**

**The Use**

## Chapter 14

# The Difference that is found between the Art and the Use.

There is the greatest difference between the art and the use, and perchance not less than between reason and luck, between confusion and good order, between knowledge and opinion. Which thing, in order that it be more manifestly understood, it is necessary that we will briefly consider and explain the definitions of the art, which, as I remember having already heard treated of with some intelligence, is not other than a multitude of useful and well-ordered precepts for civil converse; because one flower does not make Spring, nor a single precept suffice to make the art; likewise with whatsoever number of precepts, is it so with the art; but these former finally confirm themselves to be useful, and not useless; and they are not those that submerge themselves in the abyss of the dark shadows of falsities and witless opinions. For as much as that the art is not governed according to its own whim, but derives all of its precepts following the rule that the law of truth gives to it.



Truth commands the art, that it does not build on air, nor teach, if not of those things which are infallible and of perpetual truth. And those precepts that do not stand as paragons of their laws are not recognized as theirs. The use of the art encompasses much more, and considers not only the true things, but cautions us yet of the false and of the many other particulars that variously occur; and in order to show their effects, takes advantage of the aid of many disciplines. For as much as we see occur daily in civil converse, that a man is insufficient to put into practice the office or the art that he does, if help does not come from those with whom civility resides, likewise are all the arts, all the sciences, and all the professions among each other conjoined and connected, so that one has need of the mutual aid of the other, if one wishes

to put in execution his training; nonetheless, as in the civil practice each man has his own office, his solitary dwelling, and his good partitions, likewise the arts and the sciences have their distinct boundaries and their own precepts, which it is illicit for them to trespass. This difference between the art and the use, because some who teach do not observe it, makes them fall into many very grave errors. Thence it occurs that when teaching, likewise with the pen as with the sword in hand, they are long-winded and so confused and self-contradictory most of the time.

And because they do not first lay the stable foundation of the infallible and well-ordered precepts of the art, with the greatest ease and in the briefest time would they lead their scholars to that degree of perfection which one can desire in this science. In consideration of this, in order to facilitate the art of fencing, I have managed to break down all the difficulty, and to extract it from the dark shadows of confusion, condensing it in the fewest demonstrations, separated from its use, and now to you I offer and put forward to your eyes a very few figures, the greater part of which explain our art, leaving to others the care of devoting their studies to the uncertainty and infinity of particular cases, which without fixing oneself in the same state, daily we see occur in the use of arms, and if this instability and variety of things they have indeed to teach, it seems much better to me, in the school of hand in hand, that they remember that they do not teach with knowledge.

## Chapter 15

# Explanation of some Admonitions and Advisements.

Firstly, one who finds himself at blows with his adversary always has to have his eye on the others sword hand, more so than on any other place, all others being fallacious; because paying attention to the hand, he will see the stillness and all of the movements that it will make, and from this (according to his judgment) he will be able to resolve how much he will have to do.

### **OF PARRYING AND STRIKING, AND COVERING THE BODY.**

The good player, when he plays, must never parry without responding with striking; neither less must he go to strike if he is not secure to parry the risposta; nor fail to cover the body if he does not strike; and if it occurs to him to parry with the dagger, when the dagger goes out to parry, the sword must go out to strike.

### **THE VIRTUE OF THE SINGLE SWORD.**

You must know that the single sword is the queen and foundation of all other weapons, yea, that to delight therein is as, and more useful than to do so in others; because more securely does one learn to parry, strike, and cover the body, disengage the sword, counterdisengage, gain the sword against the adversary in all the guards; and during all the aforesaid effects, you will be careful to hold your arm well extended, because you will come to deflect all your adversarys blows at a distance from your body.

### **WAYS THAT ONE MUST HOLD ONESELF AGAINST A BESTIAL MAN.**

If you have an encounter with a bestial man, that is, one without measure and tempo, who throws many blows at you with great impetus, there are two things that you can do: first, adopting the play of mezzo tempo, as I show you in its place, you will strike him during his throwing of a thrust or a cut, in his swordhand or arm; alternately allow him to go into empty space, with somewhat of a slip of your body to the rear, then immediately give him a thrust in the face or chest.

### **WAY OF BECOMING A PERFECT PLAYER.**

To one who would become a perfect player, it does not suffice only to take lessons from the master, but it is necessary that he seek daily to play with diverse players, and being able to do so, he must always practice with those who know more than he, because the player with such practiced wits will become most perfect in this virtue.

### **OF THE MOST SECURE GUARD.**

You know that in my book on the art, that I do not hold to be good other than one single guard, which is the low guard called third, with the sword horizontal in a straight line that divides the right flank through the middle; and the point thereof must always point towards the middle of the adversarys body, that is, of the nearer side; and it is more secure than other high guards, because the said high guards can more easily be struck with a thrust or cut to the leg, than in the low ones; as I say, this peril is not there, and its virtue is that only the throwing of the thrust is the natural strike.

## **OF THE VANITY OF THE FEINTS.**

The feints are not good, because they lose tempo and measure; in addition it is so, that one will make the feint either in measure or out of measure; if it will be done out of measure, I do not happen to move myself, but if it will be done to me in measure, while he feints, I will strike.

## **FROM WHOM ONE MUST LEARN.**

You have to know that there are some who immediately after they have learned a little, and having yet a bit of practice, put themselves to teach others, and they teach without the foundation of the rule which is true, not knowing that knowing that knowing is quite different from teaching, and this methodical teaching is acquired with length of time, because in order to recognize measure and tempo requires much time, so that he who does not well understand measure nor tempo, and does not have a methodical teaching, can be called an imperfect player, and one must be wary of learning from these.

## **OF GAINING THE SWORD.**

It is of no small profit nor of little beauty to know how to gain the sword against the adversary in all the guards, and it is as well of no small importance, should the adversary have gained it against you, to know how to recover it; so that on this occasion, in case he gained it, there are three things that you will be able to do: first, you must never disengage to throw a full blow 'colpo finitously. a cut with long arc'; nor disengage to parry and then strike; another, retreating back, with somewhat of a slip of the body, and lowering your sword, and your adversary wanting to follow you, in the same tempo in which he comes forward to approach and gain the sword anew, you will be able to strike him during the movement of the right foot, either above or below his sword as it happens to be more convenient; and furthermore, care must be taken that we understand stringering the sword as much as gaining it.

## **OF STRIKING IN CONTRATEMPO.**

In more manners can one strike in contratempo, but I do not approve of other than two, which will be: finding yourself with your sword in fourth, with its point facing toward your right side, and your adversary coming to gain it, in the same tempo in which he moves his right foot in order to lay his sword upon yours, you will push a thrust from the said fourth, passing forward with your left foot, or with your right instead; alternately, finding yourself in third, and he coming to gain it from the outside, you will thrust him in second while passing as above.

## **OF WALKING.**

Many and varied are the opinions of masters regarding this action of walking with weapons in hand; I say (following my judgment) that walking from the right side, as from the left of the adversary, chiefly one must take care to always move the left foot accompanied by the right, and having to walk in a straight line, one foot must follow the other, forward as behind; but the true walking will be stepping naturally, always doing so, so that the point of the right shoulder will face forward, and carrying the left foot on the diagonal, so that its point will face toward your left side.

## **METHOD OF STRIKING THE HAND.**

You must know that every time that your adversary has the point of his sword outside your line, either high or low, or that it faces outside your left or right side, you will put the point of your sword opposite his hand in a straight line; leaning your body somewhat to the rear, you will approach the measure, and, having arrived, you will push a thrust in mezzo tempo into the said hand; just by propelling the body forward and bending the right knee will one strike; but you will take care that in such striking you must carry the left foot back, followed by the right; and furthermore, the enemy having his dagger arm advanced forward, you, wanting to strike it in the hand, will follow the same directions as above.



## **METHOD OF RECOVERING ONESELF, HAVING STRUCK.**

Having struck your adversary with the extraordinary pace, with the right foot forward, likewise in single sword as with sword and dagger or sword and cape, you will retire an ordinary pace, according however to the space that you have behind you; because if you have little space, you will carry back only your right leg, following your enemys sword with your sword; but if you have room, you will retire two ordinary paces, so that finally you will carry yourself in guard, and this is the true retiring, although in the schools they practice otherwise.

## Chapter 16

# Of some Terms of Fencing, that pertain to the Use of the Art.

Because it is necessary to the scholars to understand the terms that the Masters of fence use in teaching, we have the proposal of explaining them in the following briefest words.

### OF THE SWORD.

In the sword are to be considered the forte, the debole, the false edge, and the true edge; some like to make three equal divisions of the sword, namely the debole, and the forte, which are its extreme parts, and that of the middle, for as much as the one and the other partner is appropriate to parry and to strike; yet it is also found that four parts are made of it, only without some evident utility; the said terms are easy, and intelligible in and of themselves.

### OF THE GUARDS.

Guard we call a certain orientation of the hilt of the sword, which each time that it comes to be posted over the shoulder, forms the first; when it descends to be even with the shoulder, makes the second; when it is further lowered to outside the knee, on the right side, it forms the third; the fourth is made when the hilt is inside the thigh; and these four guards are called principal, and up to this point all agree; as for the pace, the arm, the body, the legs, and the line of the sword, they are of diverse opinions; because some praise the narrow pace, and some the wide, some the mediocre; some extend the arm, others restrain it more or less; some incline the body, some keep it erect; others form the guard putting forward the right leg, or now the left; some hold the sword in a straight line, some high, and some low, and now on one, now on the other side, now forward, now back, in as many lines as are found in the world; others according to the diverse circumstances indifferently avail themselves of all the previously mentioned manners of guards, which according to their differences are named high, and low, narrow, and wide, and other names acquired according to the caprices of masters. Counterguards, are named the third and the fourth, that for stringering on the outside, and this for stringering on the inside, although all the guards are counterguards, which are chosen according to the diversity of the lines of the sword.

### OF TEMPO.

Four sorts of tempos are heard named in the schools: the primo, the dui tempi, the mezzo, and the contra tempo; the primo tempo is that when, finding myself at measure, either narrow or wide, I can strike the adversary with just one movement of my sword; from which one equally recognizes that striking of dui tempi requires at least two movements of the sword; mezzo tempo is when at wide measure I strike the adversary in his advanced and uncovered arm, either that of the dagger or of the sword, with a thrust or cut, or alternately when I strike the adversary at narrow measure, as he moves himself to strike or perform some other action; redoubling of blows is usually done in mezzo tempo; contra tempo is when at the very same time that the adversary wants to strike me, I encounter him in shorter tempo and measure; and one needs to know that all the movements and all the repose of the adversary are tempos nonetheless at measure.

### OF MEASURE.

The measure is wide or narrow; wide, when the adversary can be struck only by the extraordinary pace; the narrow is when I can strike the adversary in just pace with fixed foot.

## **IN HOW MANY TEMPOS ONE KNOWS TO STRIKE.**

The first is when the enemy is fixed in guard, and he lifts or moves his foot that he has forward, that is one tempo in which to accost him; another is when you have parried a blow, then there is a tempo; the third, as he moves himself without judgment from one guard to go into another, before he has fixed himself in it, it is a tempo to offend him; and moreover it is tempo when he raises his sword, as he raises his hand, that is a tempo to strike him; and the last is that, when a blow will have traveled past your body, that is a tempo to follow it with a response.

## **OF THE PACE AND OF WALKING**

The pace is called ordinary, extraordinary, just, half pace, narrow, and wide; it increases or diminishes itself according to the diversity of the paces; one steps now forward and now back, now to the side, now on the diagonal with one leg or with both; there are those as well who, retiring the forward leg in order to void a blow, hold it suspended in the air in order to respond with greater speed.

## **OF THE PARRIES.**

One parries with the true edge, and, although rarely, with the false edge, in a straight line as in an oblique line; now with the point high, now low, now up, now down; depending on whether one is struck with a thrust or a cut, it is with one or the other of the weapons, or with both; taking care that all the parries require an extended arm, and need to be accompanied with the right leg, followed by the left, and when it occurs to parry with *dui tempi*, during the tempo in which one parries, one will draw the left foot near to the right, and then while striking, will pass forward with the right.

## **OF THE FEINTS AND OF COVERING THE SWORD**

Feints we call those deceitful gestures of the sword that are made as much of the cut as the thrust, outside and inside of the sword, up and down, forward and back, and in rotation as well as in a straight or oblique line, of the one and of the other weapon, and these feints strike directly at the opposite of that at which they gesture; the counterfeints are done as the counter to the feints. Covering the sword is a kind of feint, and it is done by covering the point of the adversary's sword with the *debole* of your sword, when one happens to be in low fourth, and needs to be done in a straight line.

## **OF CHANGING GUARD, IN GUARD.**

Changing guard in guard can be done in three ways: directly, in reverse, or in exchange; for the direct, when from first I change myself into second, and from second into third, or from third into fourth; in reverse, when I go from fourth into third, from third into second, and from second into first; in exchange, when I change myself from first into fourth, or from fourth into first, and from first into third, or from third into first, or from second into fourth, or from fourth into second. Taking care nonetheless that changing yourself from one guard to another, being at measure, you will go back with the left leg, followed by the right; thus will one be safe from the adversary.

## **AGAINST THOSE WHO CIRCLE.**

Because your adversary could easily succeed in gaining the sword against you from the inside by circling, in such case you will immediately disengage your sword through to the outside, carrying your left leg followed by your right diagonally, toward the right side of your adversary, putting the point of your sword in a straight line which is pointed at the enemy's right shoulder, and he coming from outside in order to gain it anew, in that coming you will disengage under his blade, and will strike him with a thrust in fourth, advancing your right leg with an extraordinary pace.

## **AGAINST THE GUARD OF THE LEFT FOOT.**

Finding the adversary in low third with his left leg forward, you will put yourself against him similarly in third, but with your right leg forward, and with the point of your sword crossing toward his left side, and this in order to achieve two effects: the first of which is that he will be unable to dominate your sword, which he will go seeking with his dagger; the

other is that thereby uncovering more of your body, you invite him to pass, and as he passes you will parry with your sword, and with the same third, with the point high, and passing, you will give him a stab in the chest. Moreover, if you wish to be the first to strike against the said guard of the left foot, you will put yourself to him in the encounter similarly in third with the sword in a straight line, making your point aim at your enemys dagger hand, in order to enable you at your ease to give him a stoccata in mezzo tempo in the said hand; alternately you can make a feint over his dagger, and he wanting to parry, you will disengage your sword under his dagger, passing forward with your left foot, and finding your enemys sword with your dagger in the same tempo, you will strike him a thrust under the arm; furthermore one can feint under the dagger, and he wanting again to parry, you will disengage and will strike him in second over his dagger, passing and parrying as above; taking note that one can also feint and strike without passing, but by only waiting for the adversary, in response to you having feinted, to pass to strike, and then you, only with slipping your body back during his passing, and parrying the enemys sword with your dagger, will strike him above or below his dagger, according to the opportunity that will come to you. Moreover, you must be careful that, having to deal with a left handed person, and he standing with his right foot forward, you will have to put yourself to him at the encounter with your left foot forward with your sword low and refused, and with your body leaning toward your right side, and you will carry your weapons on the same side, so that doing such, you will change your adversarys mind, he being unable to throw any blow which will not give itself to be defended.

## **OF STRINGERING THE SWORD.**

The sword is stringered for the purpose of coming to measure, or to uncover the adversary from outside and from inside, high and low, but always in a straight line, while one is fixed or the adversary moves himself, and most often it is done in dui tempi; in the first the debole of the enemys sword is acquired with a palmo of the debole of yours; in the second tempo the beginning of the adversarys forte is acquired; as much as he disengages, you counterdisengage or not, but you will take care to do so in a straight line, and that your forte always follows your debole, together with the motion of your leg.

## **MOST USEFUL ADMONITION IN REGARDS TO DOMINATING THE SWORD.**

One dominates the sword in two manners: in the first, when having acquired the adversarys sword, I never quit the domination while striking. In the second, having beaten the sword in whatever manner, so that he exits outside of my line, in that tempo in which it travels by force, it is understood to be in my domination, in which I have to strike before he redeems himself. The domination of the single sword is either of stillness or of motion, the one of the thrust, and the other of the cut. One dominates with the forte during parrying, or one beats with the debole in order to seek the tempo and the measure. In single sword, having dominated the enemys sword with the forte, you must never respond with a cut, but indeed with a thrust; the one and the other you will be able to do having dominated the enemys sword with your sword and dagger together, the dagger remaining in the guard of domination; nonetheless I exhort you to always strike with a thrust because it is more mortal, and thereby the sword does not depart from the line, the opposite of which is done by the cut.

## **OF THE DISENGAGE AND COUNTERDISENGAGE.**

The disengage, as well as the counterdisengage, is done in order to slip the measure in tempo, or in order to acquire it, and they are done either forward or back, according to the said goals; the necessary way of counterdisengaging is to follow the adversarys sword, replacing your sword back into its previous site, and this one can do on one or the other side. One must know as well that in disengaging the sword one can disengage over as well as under the enemys sword in order to gain it, but the difference between the one and the other in disengaging is this, that disengaging under in order to stringer is done with the arm extended, and with a small increase of the foot; and the disengage over is done with a slip of the body with the arm and the sword in an oblique line to the rear, so that your sword have cleared the point of the enemys sword and then replacing immediately the forte of your sword so as to be over his, and this method of disengaging must be done in order to strike as well as in order to stringer.

## **OF STRIKING.**

Striking is of two sorts: of the cut and of the thrust, but each of these comes along with more types, according to their blows, because the mandritto will be either ordinary, or fendente, or tondo, or montante, or stramazzone, or ridoppio; and

from the opposite side, they will be as above; and the thrusts convert themselves into four types. The mandritto is that which begins from the right side; and that is named ordinary which crosses through an oblique line, namely from the left shoulder to the right knee of the enemy. But the fendente is named that which goes to strike in a straight line from up to down; the tondo is named that which turns crosswise. And the montante is that which departs with the true edge of the sword from beneath and goes to strike to the point of the adversarys right shoulder. Stramazzone is that which goes in the manner of a wheel using the wrist; ridoppio we call when with a mezzo mandritto which knocked down the enemys sword, you will go returning to him another ordinary mandritto. The falso, then, is designated in two manners, namely dritto and manco; you can avail yourself of the falso dritto in order to hit outside the enemys sword, that is, toward his right side; and with the falso manco you will hit toward his left side; however it seems to me, if it occurs to you to parry with a falso dritto, I say that it will be far better to turn well your wrist and parry with the true edge for more sureness, and the true edge will turn more quickly; but when you will hit the blow with the falso manco, you will be able to strike them with a thrust as well as a cut, taking care that when you parry with the falso, you parry from the middle of your sword up to the point, and when you parry with the true edge, you must parry with the forte, from the middle of your sword down to the hilt; remember that the mandritti and riversi are done with the motion of the elbow, and in such cases when the measure and tempo support it, with the upper part of the arm.

## **OF THE CUT.**

The cuts need to be done as if slicing, because in this manner one comes to strike with all of the debole, because little by little one will come to cut with the sharpest part of the edge, and for this reason the cuts that descend are more vigorous than those that stop above the waist, to such extent that the said upper and lower parts are found to be more or less at apt measure to give slicing offenses.

## **OF THE THRUST.**

In the thrust are noted the stoccata, the imbriocata, and the punta riversa; the imbriocata is sent from the first guard, and goes to strike from the adversarys left shoulder down to his right knee, with the false edge down, so that one does not turn the hand until the point of the attack arrives, and needs to fall. The stoccata needs to be sent from third guard, and looks to strike the adversary toward his right shoulder; the punta riversa is sent from fourth, and goes to strike from outside the enemys shoulder, reversing well your hand to the inside, somewhat joining the point in falsehood, that it comes from low, upwards, toward the adversarys breast, you finding your sword in low guard.

## **Part III**

# **The Practice**

## Chapter 17

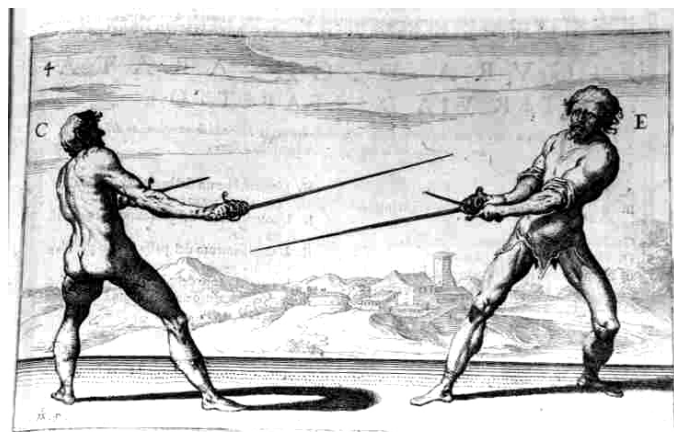
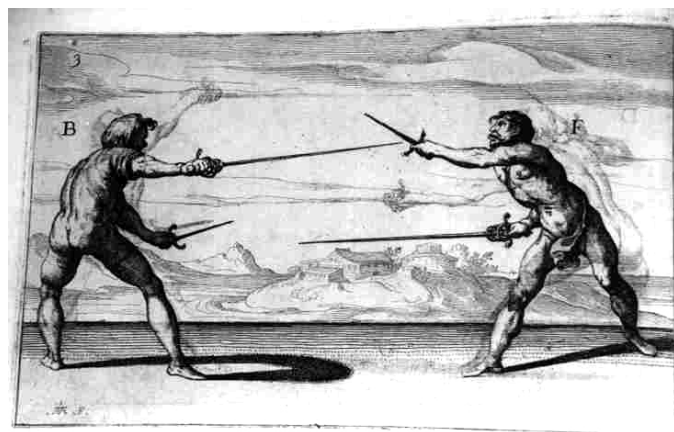
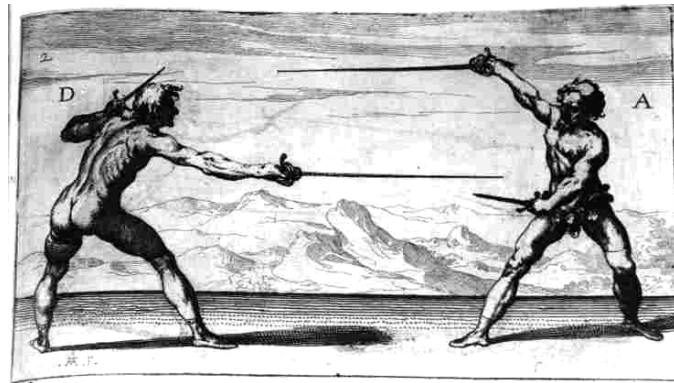
### Of Basics

#### Way of laying the Hand on the Sword.



Because in all the lands there are not the same customs, and often times enmities are expressed with little sincerity, in order to be provided against all occasions, it will not, perhaps, be out of place to teach the way of laying the hand on the sword, before we come to deal with its handling. If by chance you will have your right leg forward when laying your hand on the sword, as is shown in this figure, you will draw back the said leg, extending your right arm at the same time into high first; and if perchance you find yourself with the left leg forward, as the other figure shows, it will not happen if you do not draw your sword in the aforesaid manner, without changing of your pace; and if you would like to avail yourself of the sword and cape, or sword and dagger, as well as the single sword, the true way is, that first you will take a step with your right foot forward in order to present yourself in fourth, or alternately being near the adversary you will draw your left foot back presenting yourself as above, and then at your ease you will be able to wind your cape, or extend your hand to your dagger with more safety, being that the point of your sword will make it such that your adversary remains distant while you accommodate yourself to your weapons; and this is as much as it occurs to me to say about this particular topic.

# Of the Guards.



As one cannot make some composition of beautiful and judicious writings without employing the letters of the alphabet, so does it occur in this our art of fencing, that without the following guards, and some voids and slips of the body which come to be the foundation of this exercise, one could not in any way show this use of ours; therefore the following six figures are designated alphabetically. A demonstrates the first to you, and the second is presented to you as B, and the third as C. The fourth is named as D, the fifth as E, and the sixth as F.



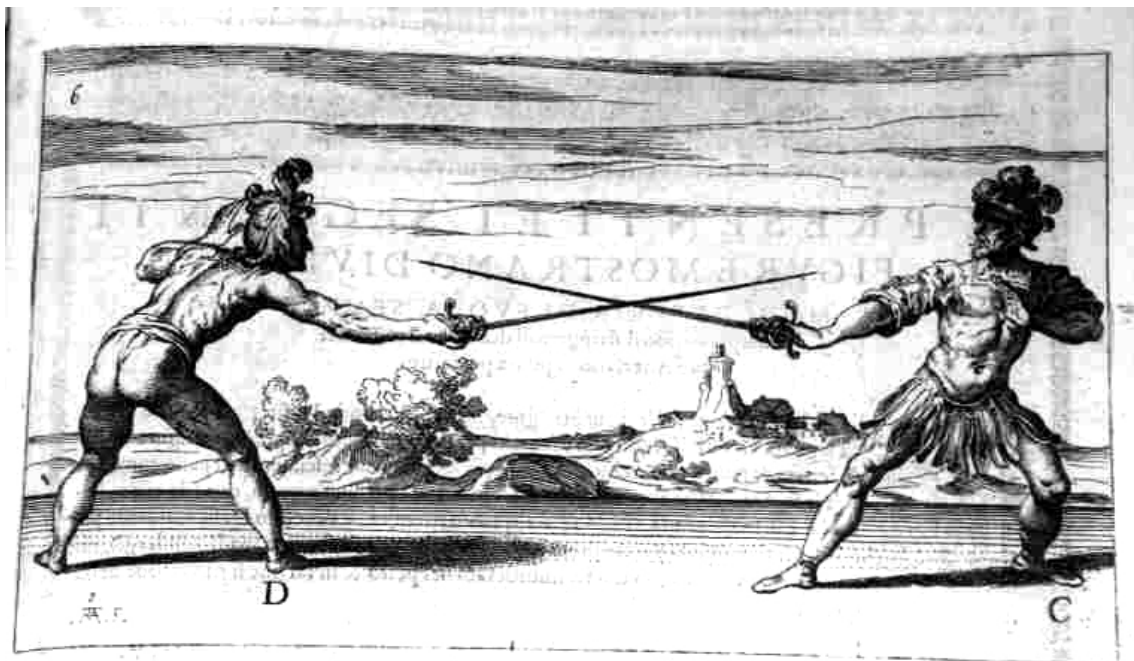
# Of the Lunge.



Figure that demonstrates resting in guard, as is shown in our art, and the incredible increase of the long blow, in regard of the members which are all moved to strike.

- A – The left shoulder
- B – The leg of the left knee
- C – The planting of the left foot
- D – Ordinary pace
- E – Sole of the right foot
- F – The thigh and the calf at a slope
- G – The hand of the right arm
- H – The increase of the right arm, of the same length
- I – The increase of the right knee, almost a step
- K – Increase of the pace, a little more than a foot (piede)
- L – The increase of the left foot, with its turn
- M – The increase of the left knee of a half pace

## Way of gaining the sword.

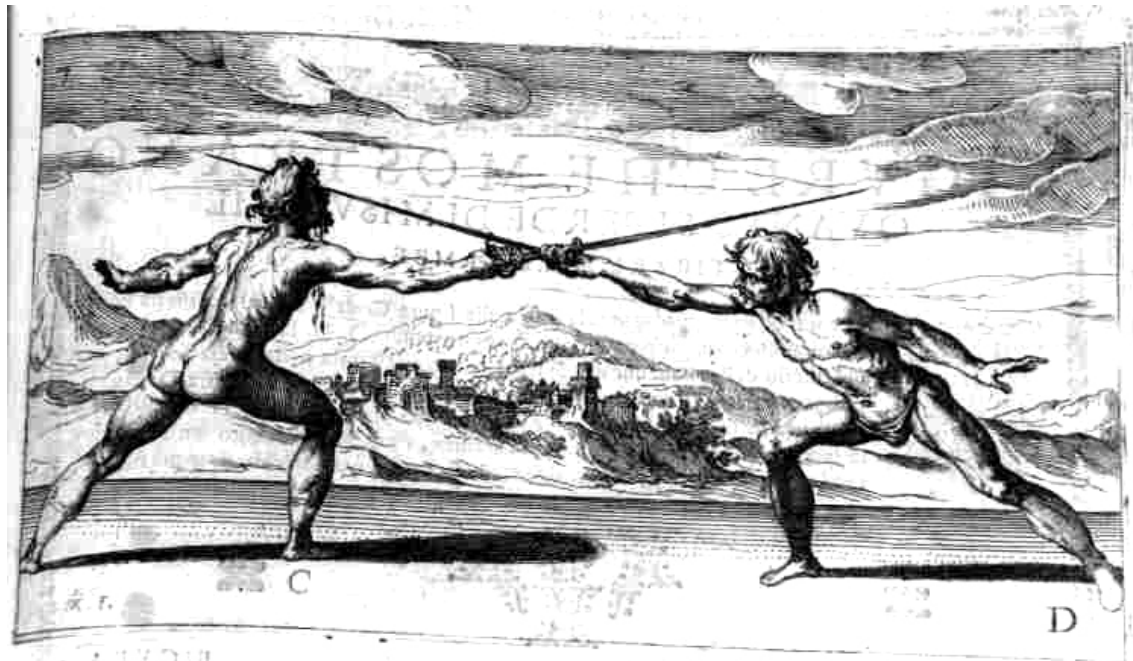


There are two causes (it seems to me) for which it is necessary to stringer the adversary: the first is to stringer the sword in order to seek the measure and the tempo; the other is to stringer the body of the adversary in order to seek only the measure; which excellent stringerings are considered in the straight line; and because there are two causes of stringering there must also be two occasions: the first occasion of stringering the sword, in order to seek the measure and tempo, is when the said adversary lies in an oblique line, because the adversary lying with the sword in fourth which is aimed on an oblique line at your left side, you will lie with the sword on the outside, and disengage with an increase of pace in order to stringer it on the inside with the said straight line, as the figures show you; from this he can cause you a good deal of difficulty, seeing as how only the said straight line suffices to stringer the sword, the adversary's sword lying in an oblique line; the second occasion, that of stringering the body in order to find only the measure, is when the adversary lies in the straight line, or with his body uncovered, then without stringering the sword in order to seek the tempo, it will suffice to only stringer the body with the straight line in order to find the measure, and then to strike according to the point; although the use of the art requires that one stringer the sword in all the lines without some utility. Striking according to the point, one must understand that every time that the point of the opposing sword be in your line then you will be able to strike in the straight line where the height of the point of the enemy's sword will give its direction, taking a palmo from the point of your enemy's sword, however, with the forte of your sword, and you will strike safely, taking heed that if it is as high as the middle of your head you will strike him in the face, and were it to the middle of your body you will be able to strike him in the face and in the breast; this is called 'to strike according to the point that the enemy's sword will give'; moreover in this way you will be able to safely disengage the sword from all sides in order to attack; however, when disengaging you will carry the forte of your sword in primo tempo to the point of the adversary's sword, and do not do as some masters do, who disengage, and do so in order to strike in primo tempo, arriving with the point of their sword on the forte of the enemy's sword, not perceiving that they give the point to the enemy, and most of the time they are offended, as is seen in our figures.

## Chapter 18

# Of the Single Rapier

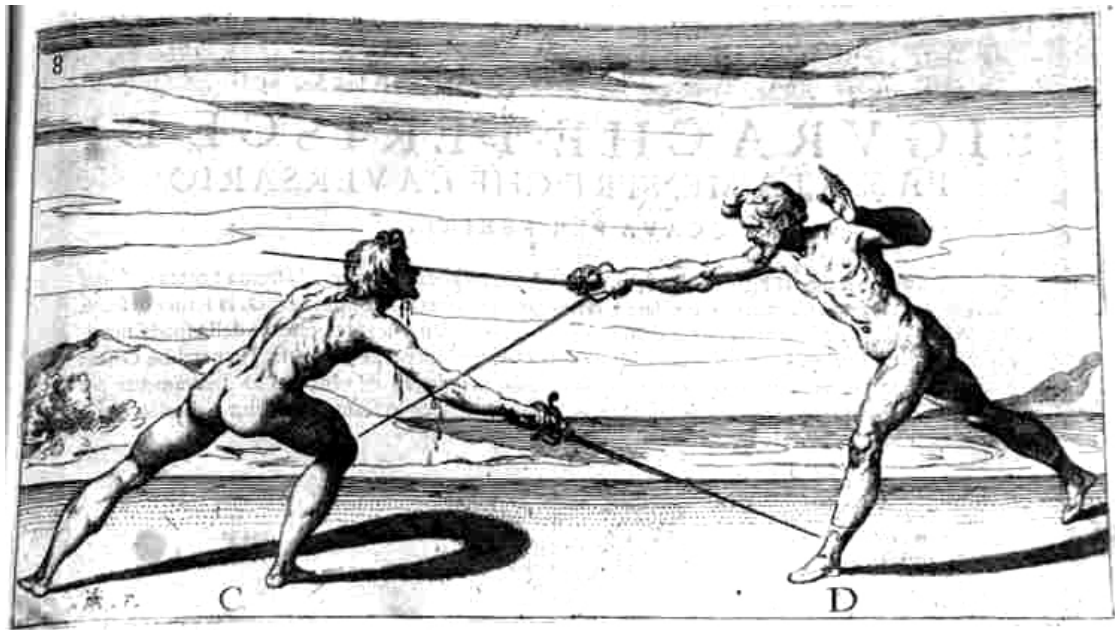
## Single Rapier - Plate 7



The present and subsequent figures demonstrate diverse manners of wounding on the outside, always presupposing a stringering on the inside and a disengage by the adversary in a thrust for the attack.

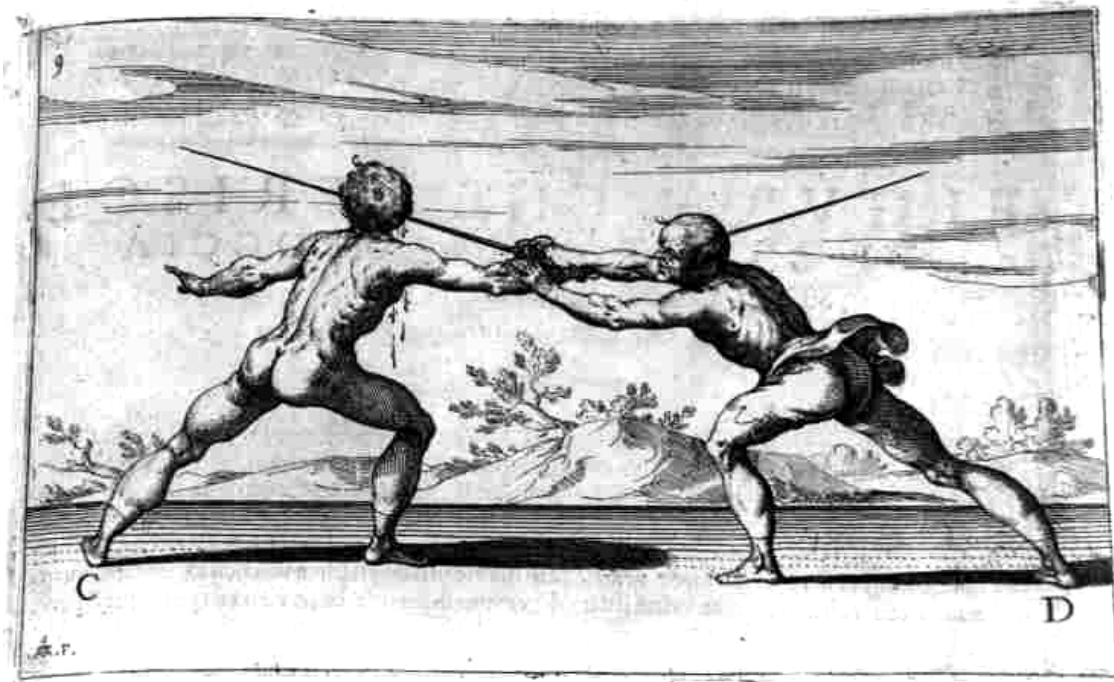
For an explanation of the following figure I say that D being narrow to the inside of the figure marked C, the same C disengages to attack with a thrust to the chest of D. D then attacks with a thrust to the left eye with a firm foot or an increase of a step as seen in the figure. But still I say that if C had been clever, when disengaging he would have disengaged by way of a feint, with his body held back, and D, in approaching, would have been confident in attacking C. Then C would have parried the enemy's sword with the false or the true edge to the outside, giving him a mandritto to the face or an imbrogata to the chest and then he would return to a low fourth.

## Single Rapier - Plate 8



Figures that demonstrate how much measure is lost by attacking the leg. C having gained the sword of D, this same C turns a riverso to the leg of the figure noted as D. During the attack of the riverso, D is able to make a stramazzone to the arm or a thrust to the face as a result of it being tipped too far forward. As seen in the figure, D throws the right leg back in the attack. Always, I say, that when D was stringering C, had C been clever, he would have given a riverso to the face followed by a mandritto fendente to the head and thus he would have been safer.

## Single Rapier - Plate 9



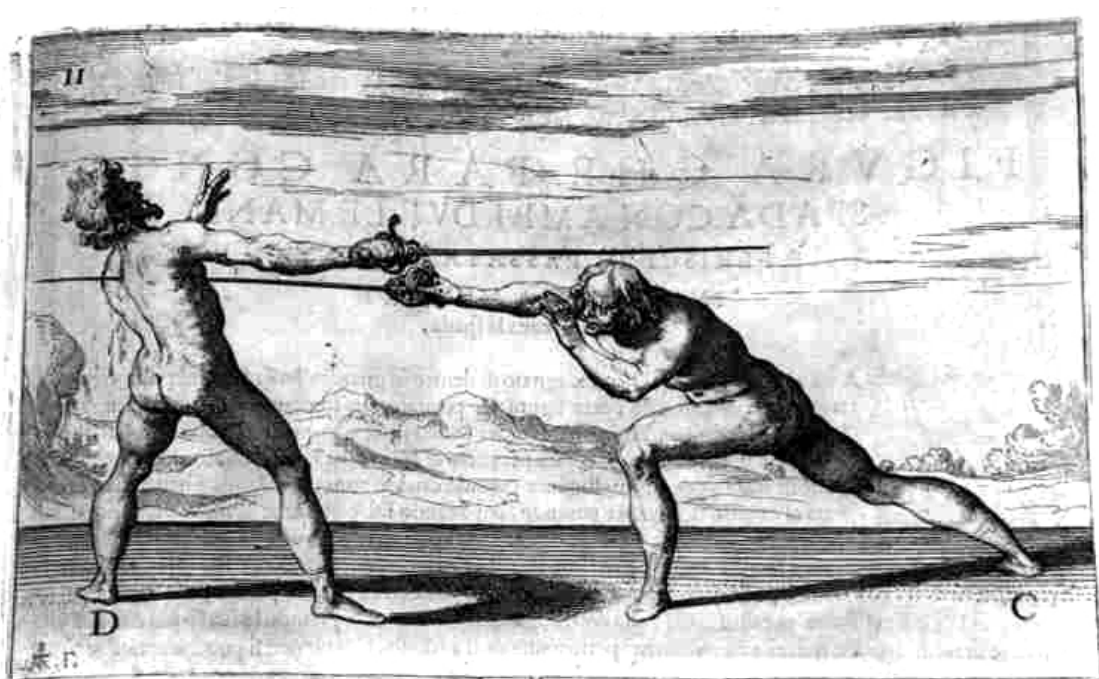
A figure that attacks in a passata while the adversary disengages in order to wound. Figure D having gained the sword on the inside of the figure noted as C, the same C disengages to give a stocatta to the face of D. D attacks him to the face in second with a passing step making a grip with the left hand at the same time of the hilt of the enemy's sword. I will never fail to say that had the one called C been a clever person, he would have disengaged as a feint with his body held back to the rear. D advancing confidently to pass, C falsing underneath his sword and turning an in quartata with a void of the body, passing his leg crossed behind, would wound him in the chest.

## Single Rapier - Plate 10



A figure that wounds in fourth to the right armpit while the adversary disengages to strike. C having gained the sword of D, the same C will turn a riverso to the face of the figure noted as D. D will then attack into the riverso in quarta, raising his arm and hilt of his sword and at the same time stepping forward well as the sword goes to the chest under the sword arm as you can see. However, instead of turning the riverso, C should have drawn back his sword while retiring back somewhat and lifted his sword in an oblique line (so that its tip was directed at the opponent's left side); [in this manner], if D had entered in fourth, C could have parried with a half mandritto and delivered a riverso to D's face or a thrust to his chest.

## Single Rapier - Plate 11



The manner of wounding in diverse ways under the enemy's sword.

Beginning in third, you will put yourself in a high transverse quarta such that the point of your sword is aimed at the left shoulder of your adversary, and he coming to cover yours in an oblique line, you during his coming turning your hand into second with a bending and lowering of the body will wound him in contra tempo to the body under his sword as shown in the figure. Second, if your adversary had you narrow on the outside, disengage a feinted thrust in fourth to the face and when he parries, turning your hand with the same bending, you will strike him under the sword, as above. Third, if he has you narrow on the inside, you will be able to disengage with a feinted thrust in third to the face and as he raises his sword to parry you will wound him under the sword turning your hand to second in the manner previously mentioned. Fourth, if you are narrow on the inside of your adversary and he disengages to thrust you in the face, you will be able to wound him in two ways: first, you will be able to attack in contra tempo as he approaches, lowering your body and your sword in third; and also you will be able to wound him by parrying in third with the point high and turning the hand to second while striking as previously mentioned. Fifth and last, if you are narrow on the outside of your adversary and he disengages to stringer your sword on the inside, at the same time you will turn the hand, and with a lowering and bending of the body you will attack in third under the sword in the same manner as above.

## Single Rapier - Plate 12

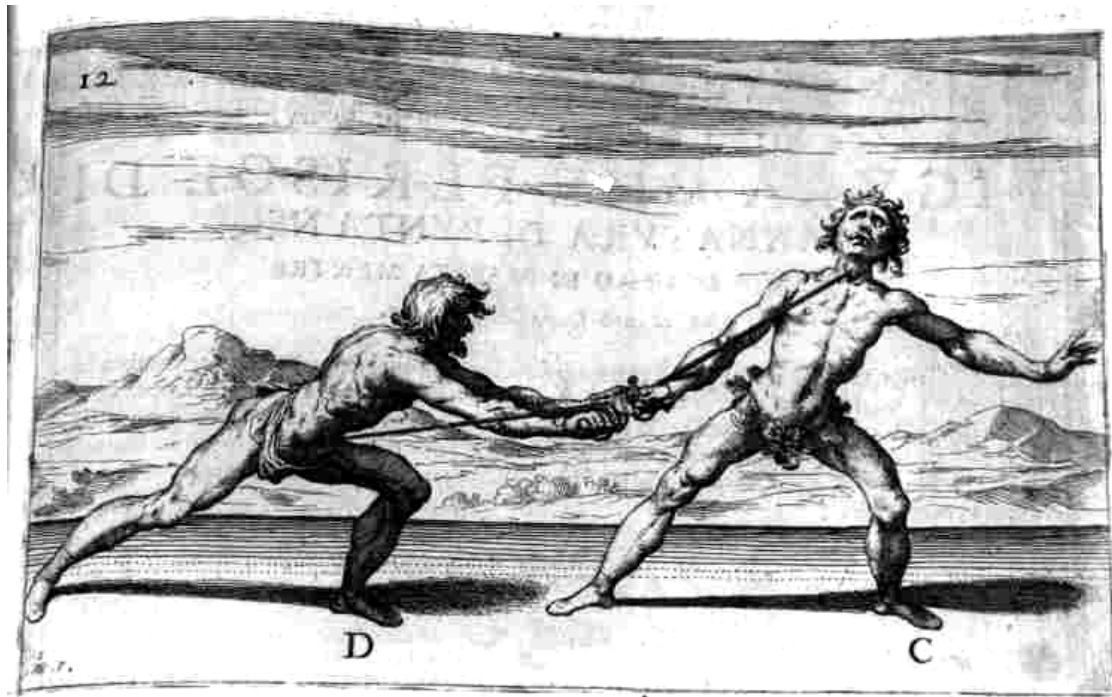


Figure that parries with the sword with both hands and wounds with a thrust to the throat with a passata while the adversary disengages the sword. Figure D having gained the sword of the figure noted as C on the inside in low guard, and C disengaging to give a stoccata to the chest of D, D passes with the left foot and at the same time presses the enemys sword down with both hands and attacks the chest in third. But without any doubt, if C had been an intelligent person, when disengaging the point to attack he would have disengaged somewhat retired, and D, parrying and passing with both hands to wound C, C only with a lowering of the point of the sword toward the earth and turning the hand to second with a voiding of the body to the left side of the adversary and a disengagement of the edge above the enemy's sword will wound on the inside with a riverso to the face, returning to third; or having parried, he will pass to the inside with the left leg; turning the body to the right, and holding his sword with both hands, while turning he will give a thrust to the chest going to D so that he cannot be saved.



# Single Rapier - Plate 13

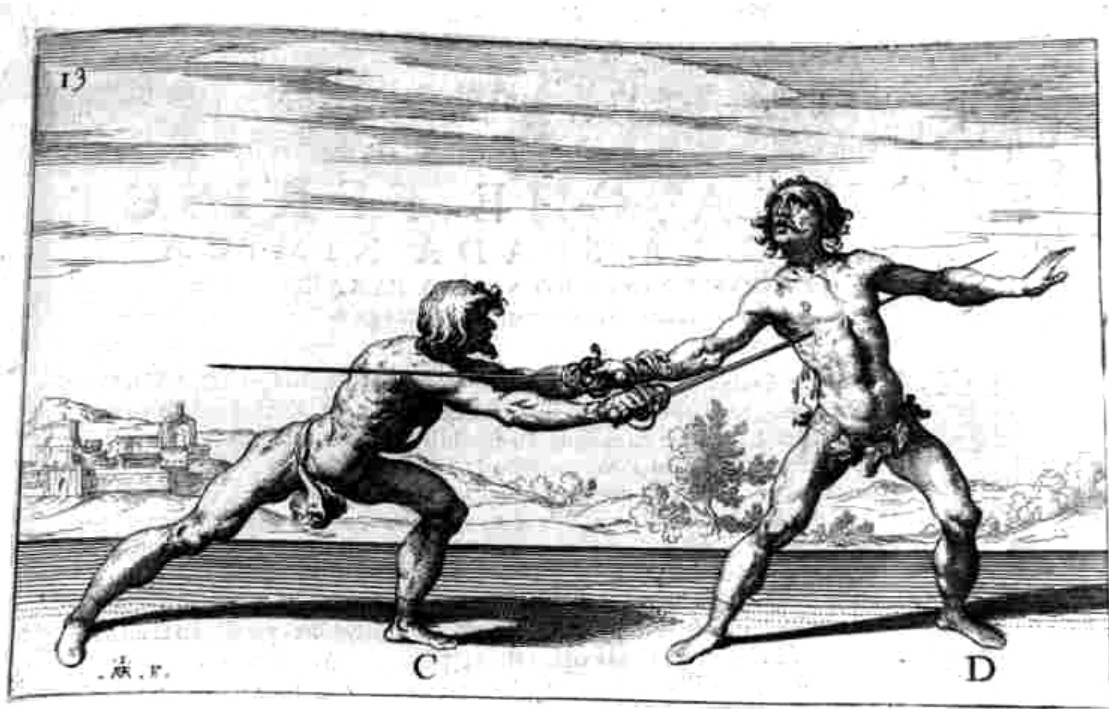


Figure that wounds with a scannatura of the point to the right flank with a step while the adversary disengages to attack. This manner of attack is called the scannatura, which is made in the following manner with C being narrow on the outside of the sword of the figure noted as D. The same figure D disengages a thrust to the face of C and the same C, meeting the sword of the enemy on the outside, lowering the point to second and passing with the left leg at the same time wounds him in the flank, lowering his hilt with his body and seizing his hand as you see.

## Single Rapier - Plate 14

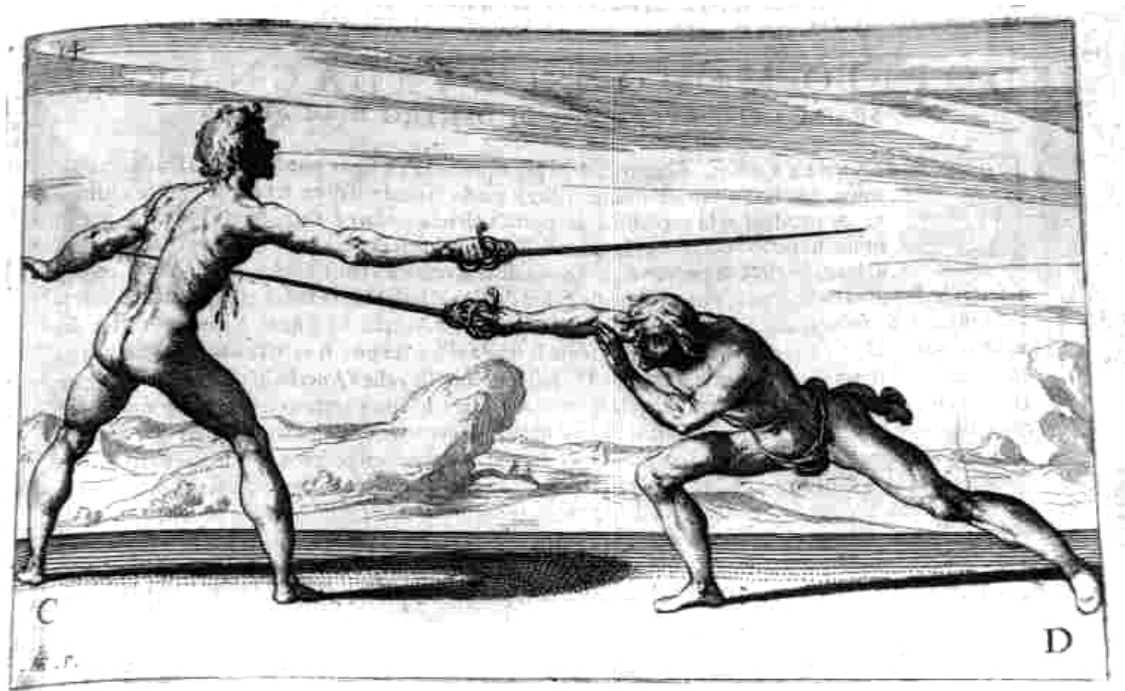
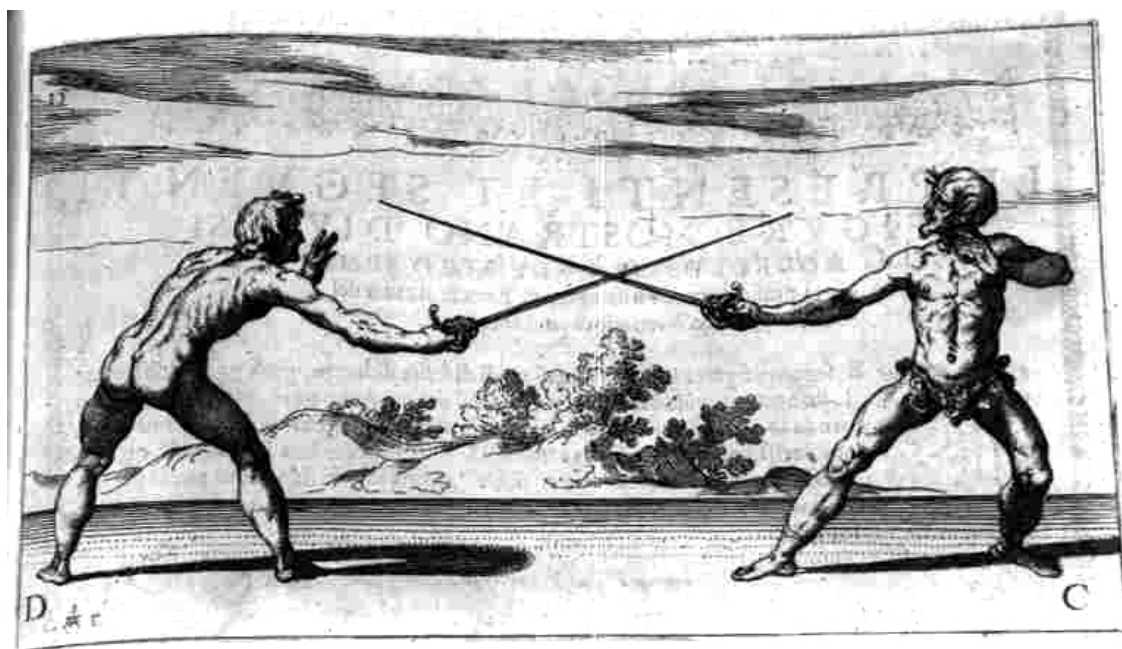


Figure that wounds under the sword of the enemy in contra tempo without parrying, only with a lowering of the body as demonstrated in the picture. D having gained the sword of C on the inside, the same C disengages to give a stoccata to the face of D. D lowers the body and steps forward with the right leg at the same time wounding in contra tempo without parrying, in second, below the enemy's sword as in the picture. And he would be more able to succeed in the said thrust if he would have done it differently, that is when C disengages to give a stoccata to the face of D, D would parry in third with the point high and in the same tempo lowering the point and turning the sword to second he could attack to the chest with a passing step while grabbing the sword hand. But if C was a practiced person he would have thrown the right foot to the rear and in his approach he would confront the enemy's sword on the outside and in the same tempo lower the point and turn the hand to second to attack with a scannatura below the enemy's sword. Or in his drawing back, he could parry with the left hand from above to below his arm and wound D in a high second to the chest or to the face.

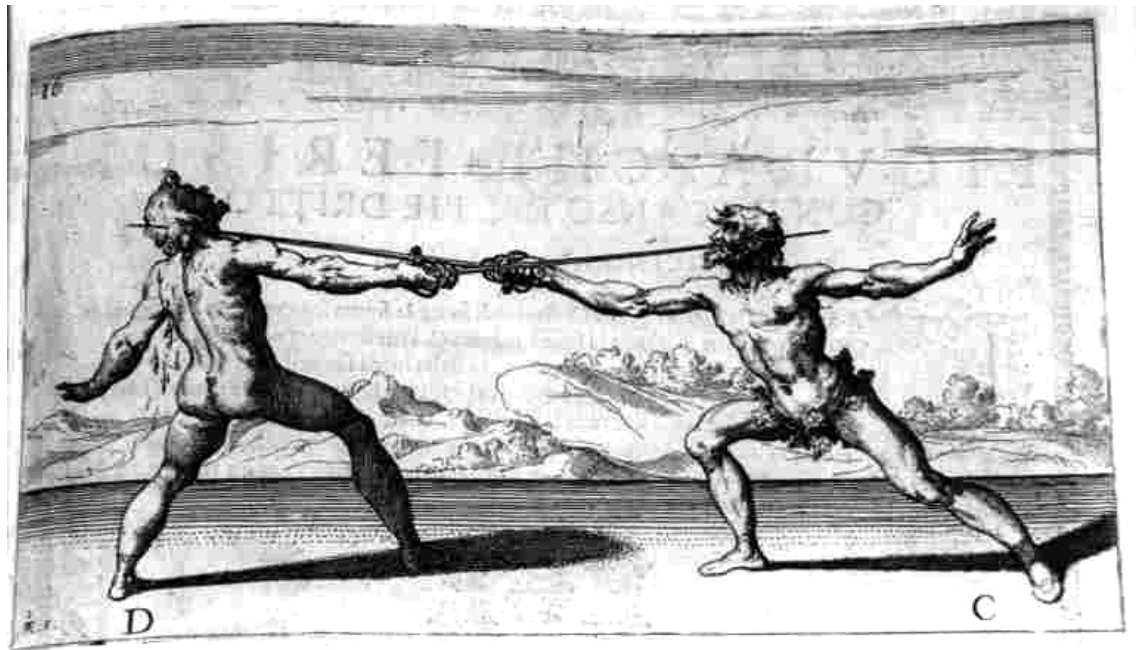
## Single Rapier - Plate 15



Double mode of gaining the enemy's sword on the inside and the outside.

Knowing through experience how useful it is to know how to gain the enemy's sword, I have not wanted to fail to say the manner which one must adopt, going to stringer and gain the same. First, in wanting to go to stringer the adversary's sword, on the inside as on the outside, according to the occasion, one must stringer the same at a distance of about one palmo from the point. If it occurs that one has to stringer on the inside, the point of the sword will look to the right shoulder of the enemy; and if to the outside it will look to the left shoulder. Having done so, one will go walking towards the sword of the enemy; if it occurs that he disengages, in that instant one will counterdisengage with a return of the sword to its place, or with the same counterdisengage one will wound him in the tempo of his disengage. Moreover, if it occurs that the adversary comes to stringer the sword, on the inside or the outside, which is found lying level in the straight line with the arm extended, in that instant one will disengage and stringer, walking forward. And if it occurs that you must disengage in order to stringer on the inside, you will, in this disengage, carry your right foot forward, bending your body toward your right side, carrying your left hand near to your right, and passing then with your left foot, you will strike him with a thrust in the breast in fourth; and having to disengage in order to stringer on the outside, one will in a similar manner carry the right foot forward with a bending of the body to your left side, and passing with the left foot, wound in second to the chest. Moreover, be aware that the following figures demonstrate stringering the sword on the outside in third; however you must follow the rule of gaining the sword of the adversary as stated above.

## Single Rapier - Plate 16



The present and subsequent figures demonstrate diverse ways to attack to the inside always presupposing a stringering on the outside and a disengagement by the enemy of the point in order to attack.

The following figures demonstrate diverse ways to attack on the inside presupposing always a stringering on the outside on your side, and on that of your adversary, a disengage in order to attack you. D disengages as aforementioned and C will attack in fourth with a firm foot, or with a step, to the throat or face. But if D had been an intelligent person, when he disengaged he would have done so with a beating of his enemy's sword with his edge, followed with a thrust to the face or a *riverso* to the arm of figure C, then retiring into *terza* in ordinary pace.

## Single Rapier - Plate 17

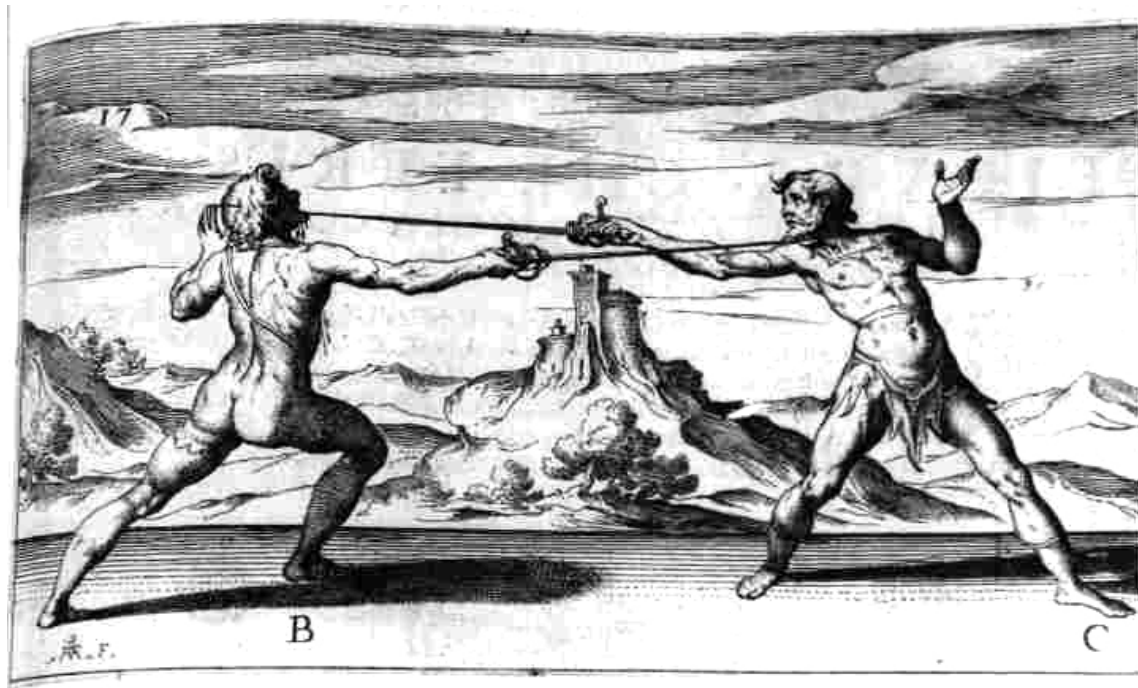


Figure that strikes near the ear with a void of the right foot. The figure noted as C being narrow on the outside of figure noted B and this figure disengaging to attack in 4th the figure called C, the same figure noted as C attacks with a void of the right foot in a traverse to the outside of his sword and attacks into the face near the ear. I will never fail to say that if B had been an experienced person he would have disengaged the sword in order to feint, and with the body held back rather a little to the rear, and C coming confidently toward B in order to strike B with the void of the crossed right foot, B, meeting his enemy's sword on the outside, lowering his point in second and passing with the left leg in the same tempo, would wound him in the flank, seizing his sword hand.

## Single Rapier - Plate 18

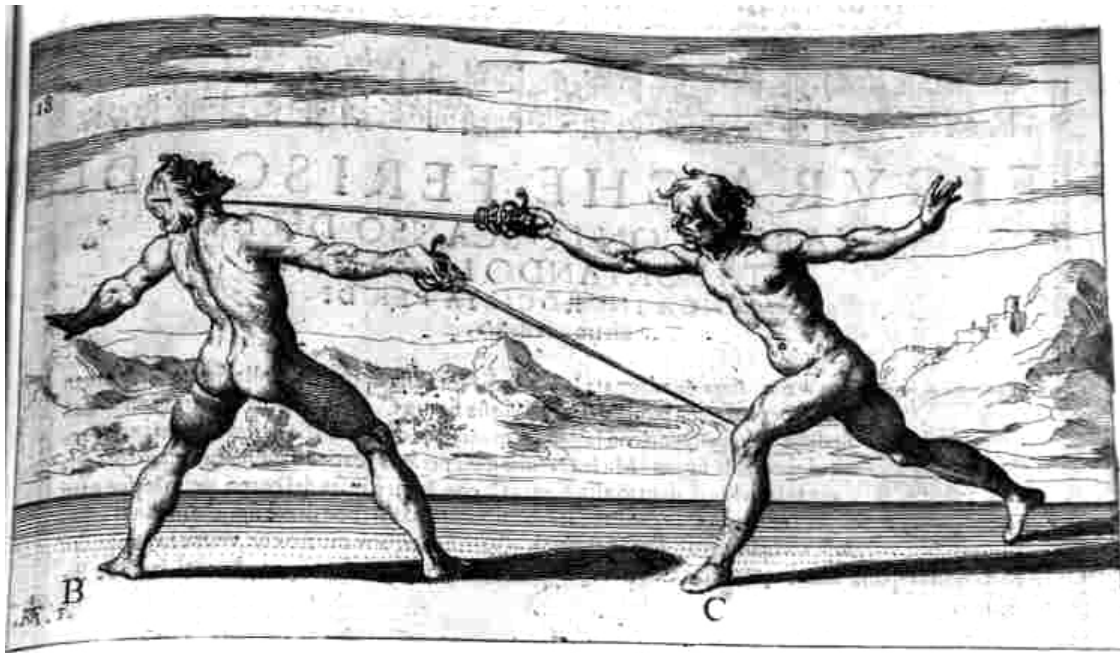


Figure that wounds to the throat in fourth on a pass with the left foot. The figure designated as C being narrow to the outside of the sword of the figure B, and the same figure B disengaging to give a stoccata to the face of C, C wounds him during the disengage in the throat or the face in fourth on a pass as the picture shows. But if B had been an experienced person he would have disengaged his sword to feint, with his body held back somewhat to the rear, and C coming securely to pass forward in fourth, B turning then with a void of his body, passing with his left leg behind his right, would wound him in the chest.

## Single Rapier - Plate 19

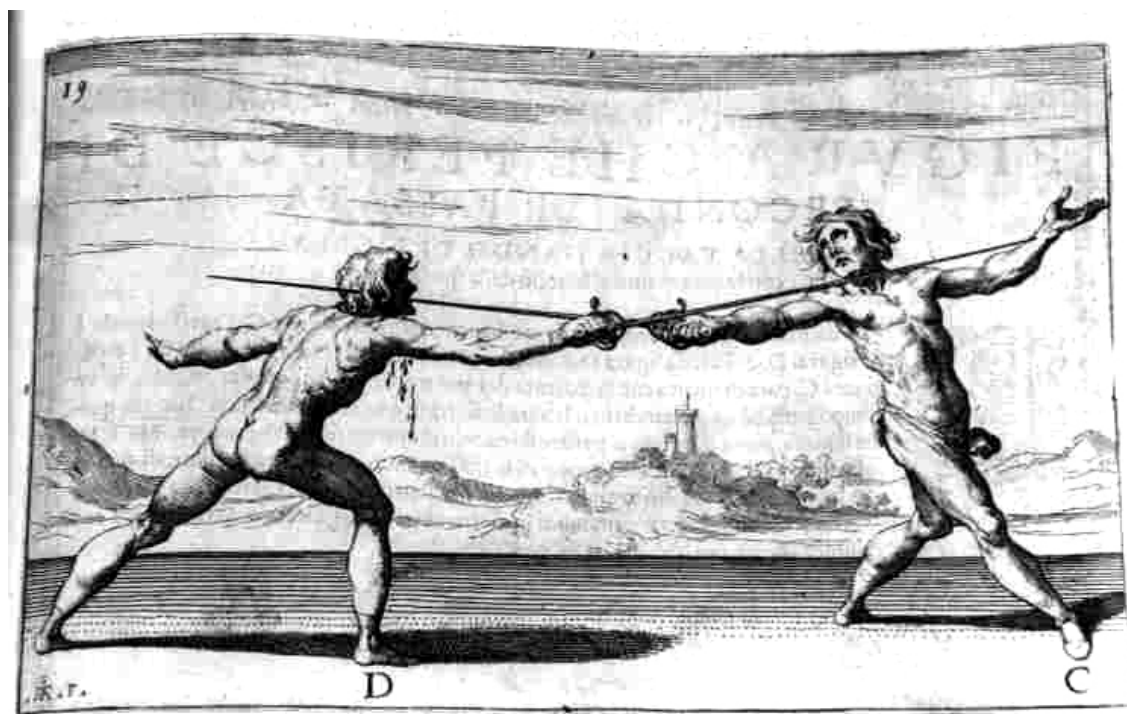


Figure that wounds in fourth with a void of the body carrying the left leg crossed behind the right. Figure D having gained the sword against figure C on the outside, and D disengaging to give a thrust to the face of C, C wounds in fourth with a void of the body by stepping with the left leg crossing behind the right as the figure demonstrates. If D had been an experienced person he would have disengaged to gain the sword on the inside of C with a bending of the body toward his right side, and having gained it, would have passed forward immediately with the left foot, giving him a thrust in fourth to the chest, or he would have disengaged with a mezzo mandritto, beating the enemy's sword, giving C a riverso to the face, returning to third and thus he would have been secure.

## Single Rapier - Plate 20



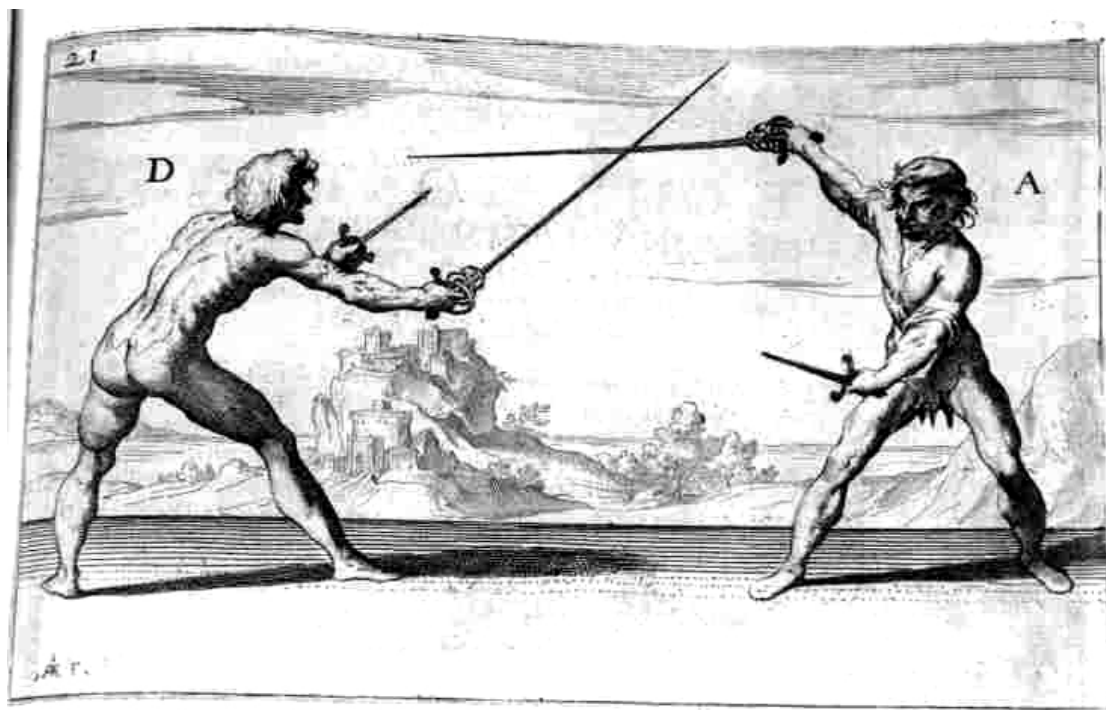
Figure that strikes the face in second on a passata while seizing the sword arm of the enemy with the left hand. By clarification of the following figures, C, having his adversary, that is, the figure D, narrow to the outside, and the same D disengaging to give a stoccata to C, the same C parries the enemys sword in fourth with a beat of the right foot, and all in one tempo, passing and turning the body, he will strike him in second in the face, although this can also be done without passing, striking him in fourth in dui tempi. But if D had been a person practiced at swordplay, when C disengaged to parry in fourth with a beating of his right foot, D would have counterdisengaged his sword to the outside and would have struck him in the face in second, retiring to the rear into third, following the enemys sword with his sword in said retiring, and thus would C be wounded.



## Chapter 19

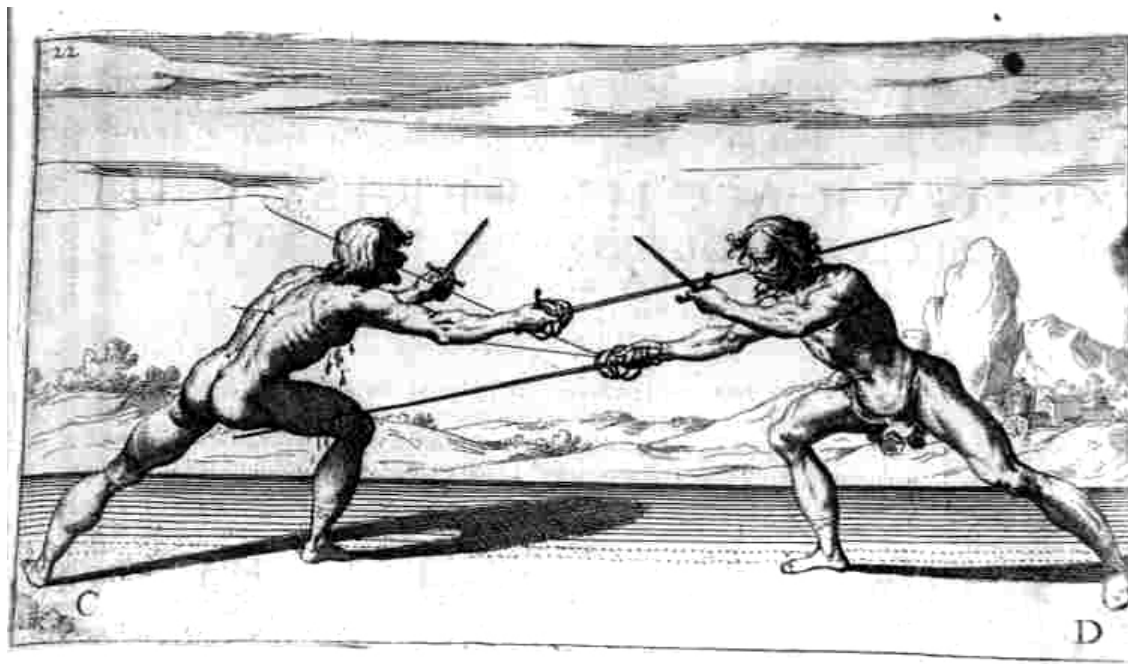
# Of the Rapier with Dagger

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 21



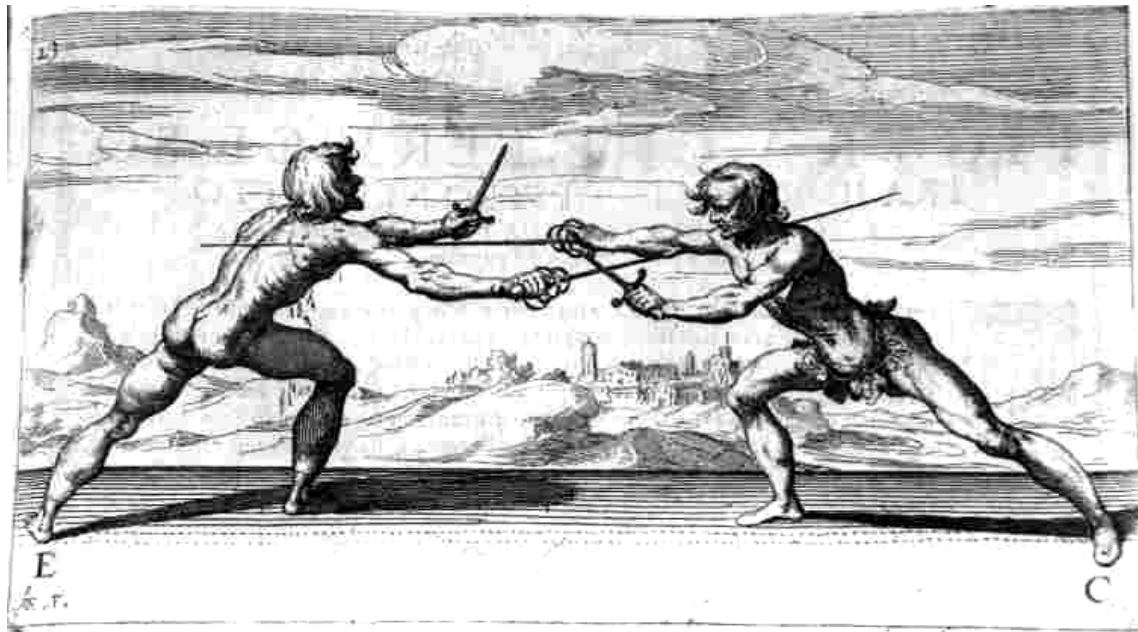
Figures of the sword and dagger which demonstrate the manner of stringering the adversary's sword finding oneself in a high prima on the inside, noting that if the point of the enemy's sword is aimed at your right shoulder then it must be found on the outside; and you will adopt the same manner in gaining the low guards. The following figures demonstrate the play of sword and dagger, and principally is taught the manner of stringering the sword of the adversary, finding oneself in a high prima, noting that it is not possible in a figure to demonstrate all of the manners of stringering on the outside and on the inside, from low and from high, deferring the description to the reader of such, noting only that if the point of the enemy's sword is aimed towards your right side you will find him on the outside, and moreover that if it occurs to you to stringer the low guards, one stringers with the sword in the sloping line, with the third as with the fourth.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 22



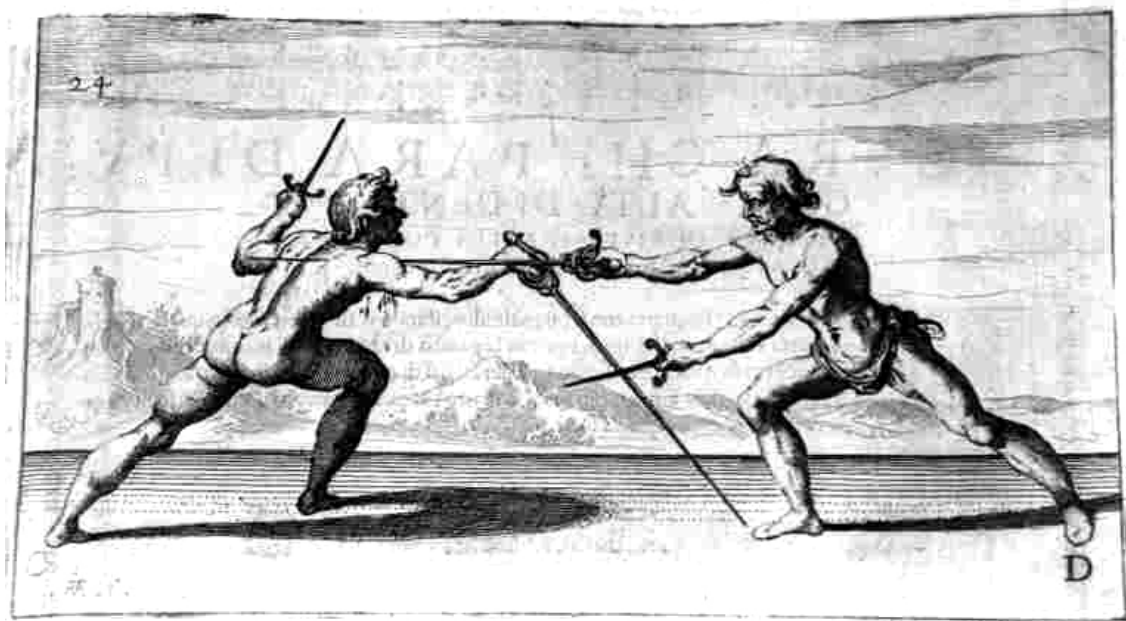
Figures that demonstrate how with a single parry with the dagger it is possible to wound in three places with the point, that is in the face, to the chest, and to the thigh. These following figures demonstrate an artful manner of wounding in three diverse ways with the thrust and with a single parry of the dagger, which are done thus: you being in fourth, having the adversary narrow on the inside in whatsoever guard apt for stringering on the inside, he can disengage to give you a thrust in two ways: to the face or chest. However, he having disengaged to attack you, you will parry his sword to the inside with your dagger over your right arm, and in the first occasion you will be able to attack him high or low, that is, to the face, or under the arm to the chest or in the thigh; and in the second only to the face or thigh.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 23



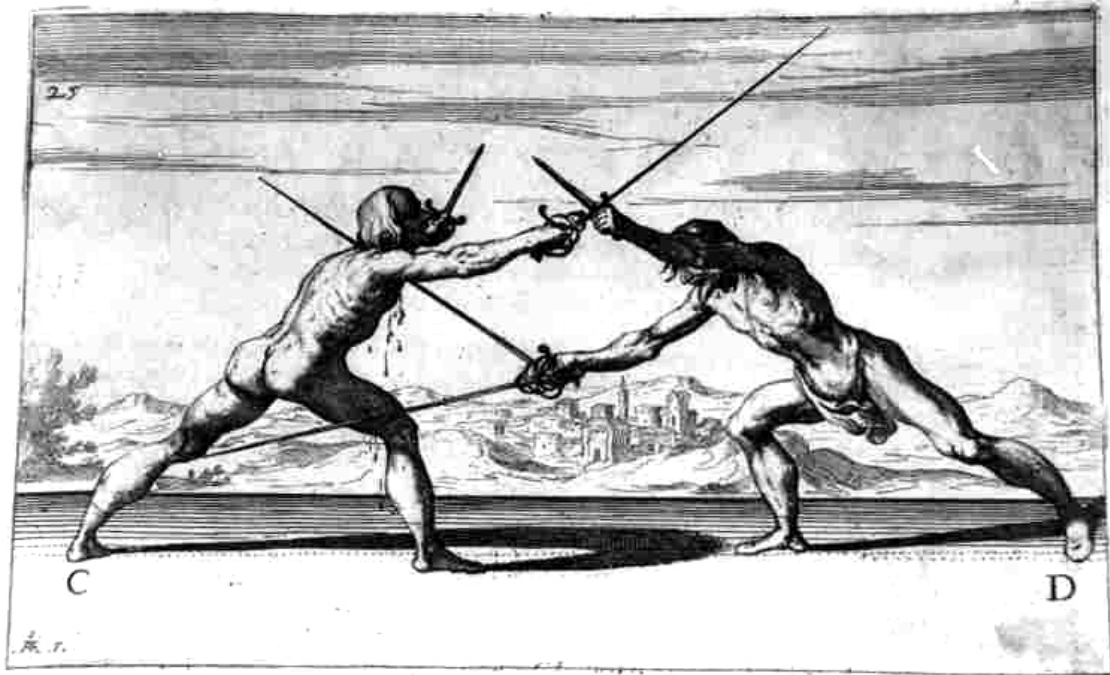
A figure that wounds in second to the chest between the weapons by a pretense, disengaging over the dagger, and also in the same manner could have wounded in fourth. The adversary lying in a low third with the arm withdrawn, and with the dagger forward and united with the sword, you will place yourself opposite him in a high third, making a feint in a high fourth or a similar third outside of the dagger to the face, and while he raises his dagger to parry and attack you in fourth, you will disengage over his dagger and in the same tempo parrying to the inside you will wound him in second to the chest.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 24



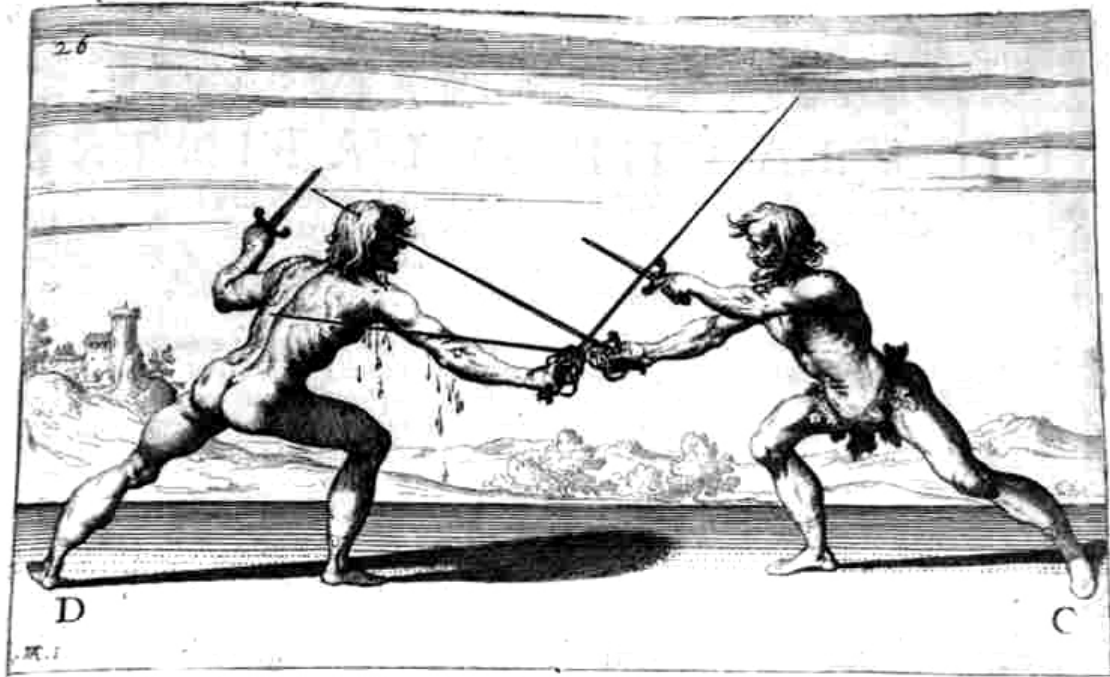
A figure that strikes above the right arm to the chest and makes the sword fall with the schiodatura (unfastening) of the sword and the dagger. With this figure you will easily comprehend and learn the manner of casting down the sword from the hand and giving as well in the same tempo a thrust to the chest. That is to say finding yourself in third with the arm withdrawn and uniting the dagger with the sword, the adversary being in the same guard, or in fourth, you will commence to stringer his sword on the inside in fourth and you will lower your dagger to the middle of your right arm in an oblique line; and your adversary disengaging in fourth to thrust you in the chest you will wound him to the outside with a punta riversa to the body, raising the hilt of your sword somewhat and in the same tempo parrying down with the flat of your dagger to the outside you will cause him to abandon his weapon through force.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 25



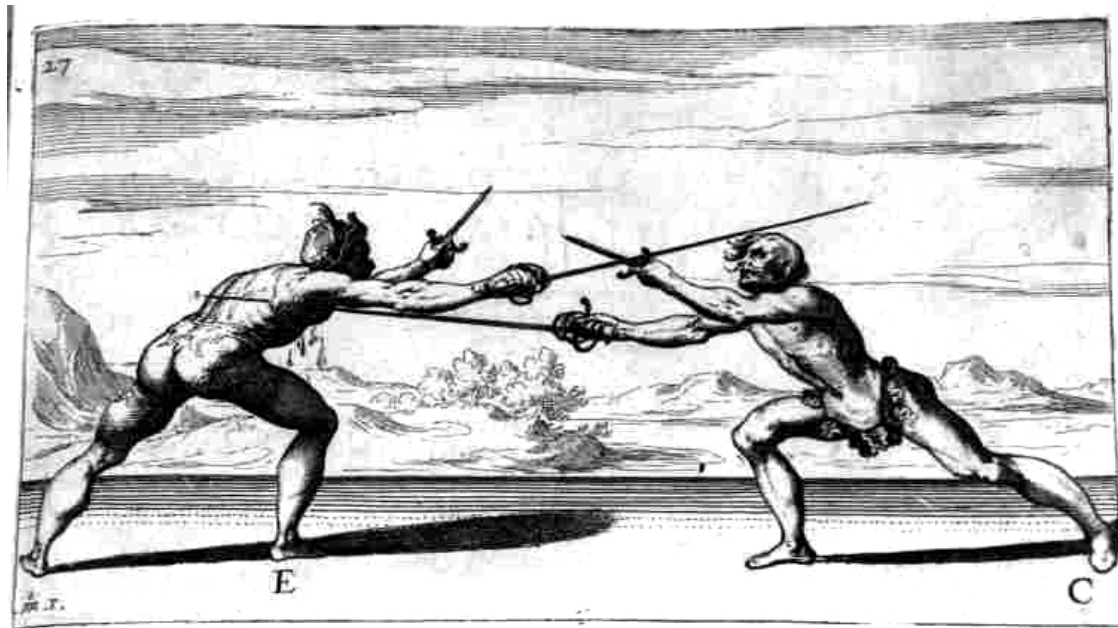
A figure that parries with the dagger high to the inside and wounds with a roverso to the thigh, and in fourth to the chest as demonstrated in the picture. Finding yourself in fourth with the dagger high and your adversary in whatsoever guard apt for stringering on the inside, with the right leg forward, you will commence to stringer him on the inside in fourth, and he disengaging to wound you in fourth to the face, you will parry to the inside with the dagger above your right arm, and you will be able to wound him either with a riverso to the thigh or with a quarta below the arm.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 26



A figure that parries with the sword in fourth accompanied with the dagger and wounding in fourth to the face or with a *riverso* to the arm as shown in the picture. If it so happens that you find yourself in an extended third with the dagger at your wrist and your adversary in whatever guard he wants apt for stringering on the outside, you will commence to stringer him in the same third, now high, now low, and according to the occasion without moving the dagger from its place, and your adversary disengaging to wound you in fourth or second, parrying in fourth with the sword accompanied with the dagger you will be able to wound him, as you can see, either by a *riverso* to the arm or a *quarta* to the face.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 27



A figure that makes a feint above the dagger, and the enemy, raising to parry the same, strikes him in the chest, disengaging the sword under in fourth. Finding yourself in an extended third with the dagger at the wrist and the adversary in a low fourth with the sword withdrawn and his dagger high and extended, you will commence to make a feint above his dagger in third. Maintaining your dagger in its place, he parrying up with his dagger, wanting to strike you in the same tempo in fourth or second, you will disengage under, and parrying his attack therewith you will wound him in fourth in the chest.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 28

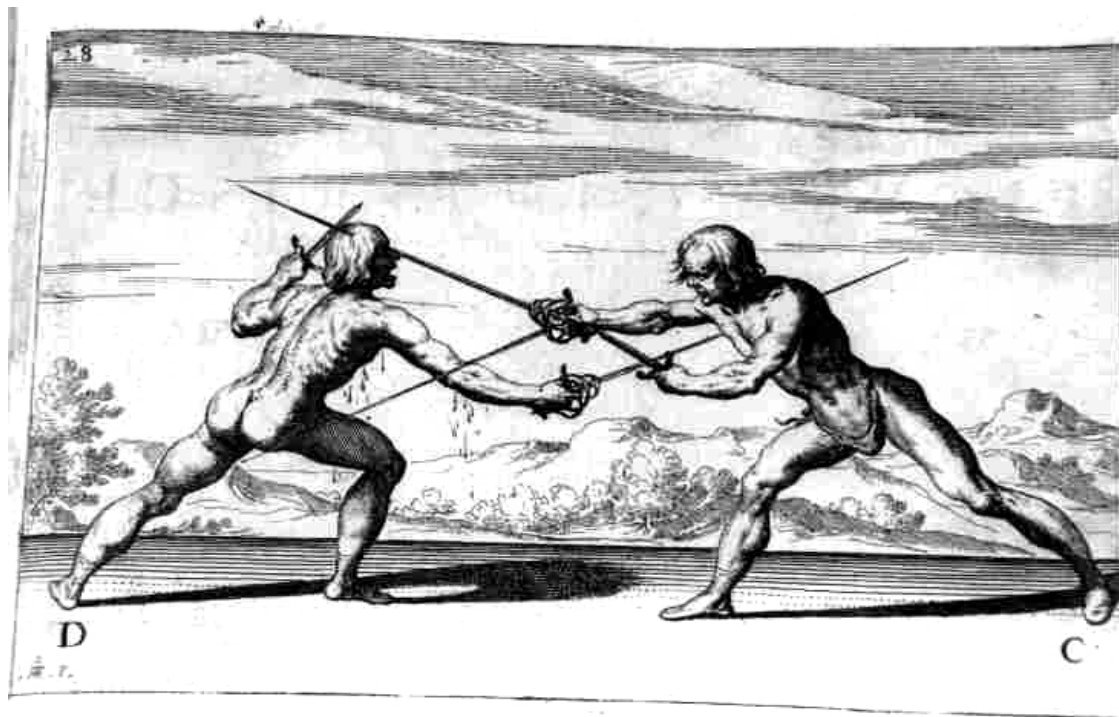


Figure that parries under his right arm with the dagger, and strikes in second into the face or with a stramazzone riverso in the sword arm. Lying in a low or high third, with your dagger at your wrist, your adversary being in whatsoever guard accommodated to stringer on the outside you will begin to stringer on the outside in high or low third, according to the occasion, elevating your dagger, and he wanting to disengage through to the inside, and throw from fourth or second, you parrying down with the dagger under your sword arm, will throw at him a stramazzone to his arm or you will strike him in second in the face, as is shown:



## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 29

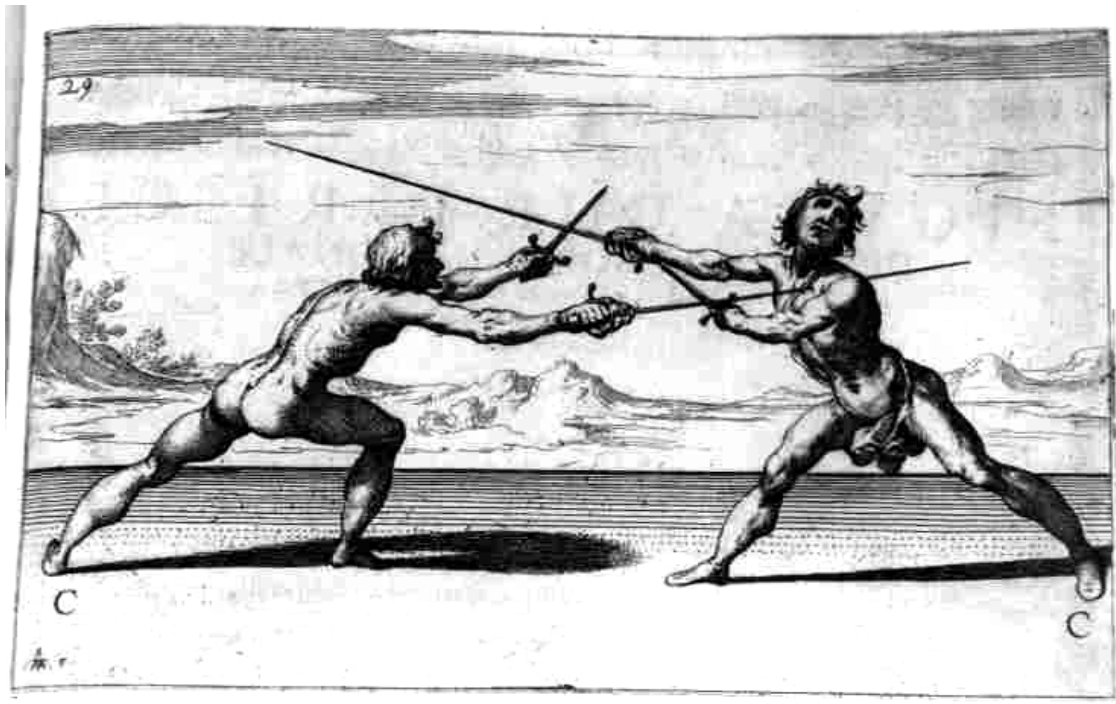


Figure that strikes over the dagger in second into the left shoulder while the adversary seeks to gain the sword against him from the outside. If you lie in extended third with your dagger in an oblique line over the beginning of the forte of your sword, your adversary being in the same guard, he coming to stringer on the outside also in third, you will disengage and beat his sword with yours in fourth all in one tempo, and immediately parrying his already pressed sword with your dagger, you will strike him at the same time over his dagger in the left shoulder.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 30

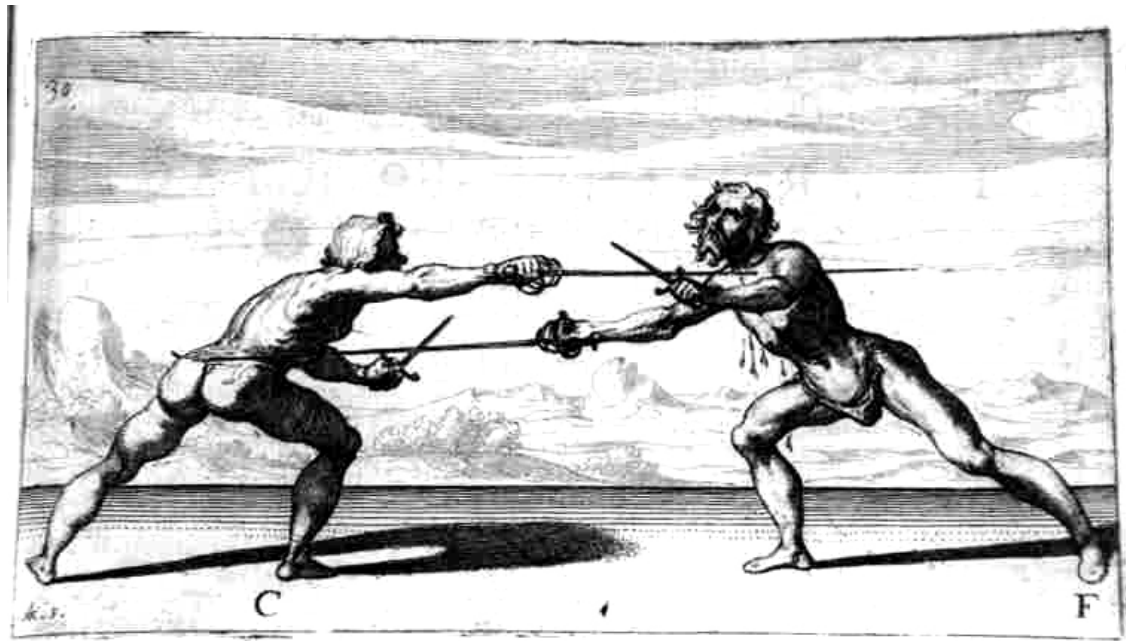


Figure that strikes in second over the dagger into the left shoulder from a feint, parrying with his dagger from above to below under his right arm. You being in third or fourth with your arm back, with your dagger at your wrist, your adversary being in fourth with his sword back and dagger high and extended, you will make a feint at him from under his dagger, elevating yours, and parrying him down with your dagger toward his left side you will disengage in the same tempo over his dagger, parrying the enemys sword to the inside under your right arm, and you will strike him in second over his dagger.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 31



Figure that strikes on a passata with a thrust in falso from beneath, up between the weapons into the breast, parrying with his dagger over his right arm, stringering well the weapons together. The adversary lying in third with both weapons extended in an oblique line, so that the point of his sword is aimed at your right shoulder and that of his dagger is aimed at your left, you will put yourself opposite him in third with the point of your sword low and with the dagger high, with your body bent as much as possible toward your left side; and he wanting to approach in order to stringer you, or for some other aim of his, you will pass with your left foot in the same tempo toward his right side, and parrying with your dagger toward the inside over your right arm you will extend to him a thrust in falso from beneath up between his weapons, or alternately with both weapons disengaging with the sword above you will press his sword striking him in third in the very same tempo.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 32



Figure that strikes in fourth into the throat only with falsing the sword and lowering the dagger in order to parry while the adversary disengages from the sword and seeks to parry with the dagger. The adversary lying in high third with his dagger crossed and joined at the beginning of the forte of his sword, somewhat oblique, you will stringer it in third on the outside, with the dagger high, and he disengaging under, assisting himself by parrying with his dagger in order to strike you in fourth, you will parry with your dagger from up to down, toward your left side, and in one tempo disengaging under his dagger, you will strike him in fourth in the face, or wherever it happens to be more convenient.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 33

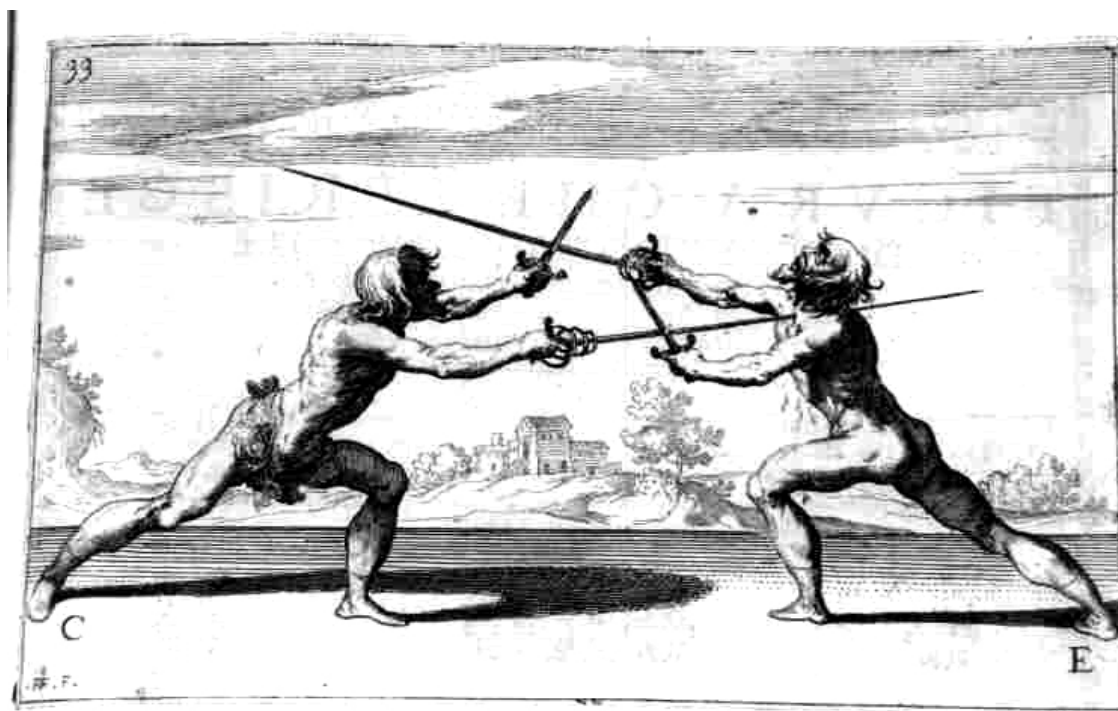


Figure that strikes in fourth under the dagger into the breast, carrying the right leg back and parrying high with the dagger, while the adversary passes forward with his leg in order to strike in second over his dagger. The adversary lying in low third, you will oppose him in high third with your dagger joined across over your forte, and he coming on a passata to strike you in second over your dagger, and parrying wide with his, only pulling back your right leg, he raising his dagger to parry, you will disengage under his, carrying your body well forward, as the figure shows, and you will strike him in fourth.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 34

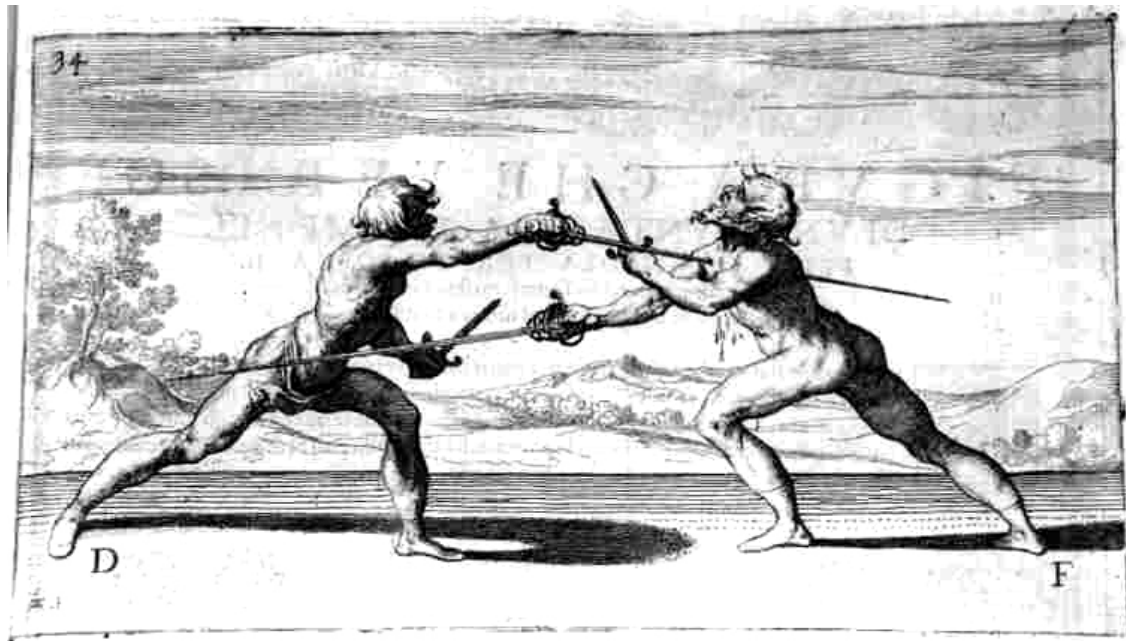


Figure that strikes in second over the dagger into the breast while the adversary passes with his left foot in order to strike, only with pulling back the right leg during his approach, and parrying with the dagger under his right arm. Although the adversary lies in fourth with his sword back and low, and with his dagger extended high and wide, you will oppose him in fourth with your arm extended and dagger high, and he moving on a passata to parry your sword down from high in order to strike you in second, pulling back your right leg, you will parry him down with your dagger toward your right side, and you will disengage your sword over his dagger, and will strike him in second.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 35

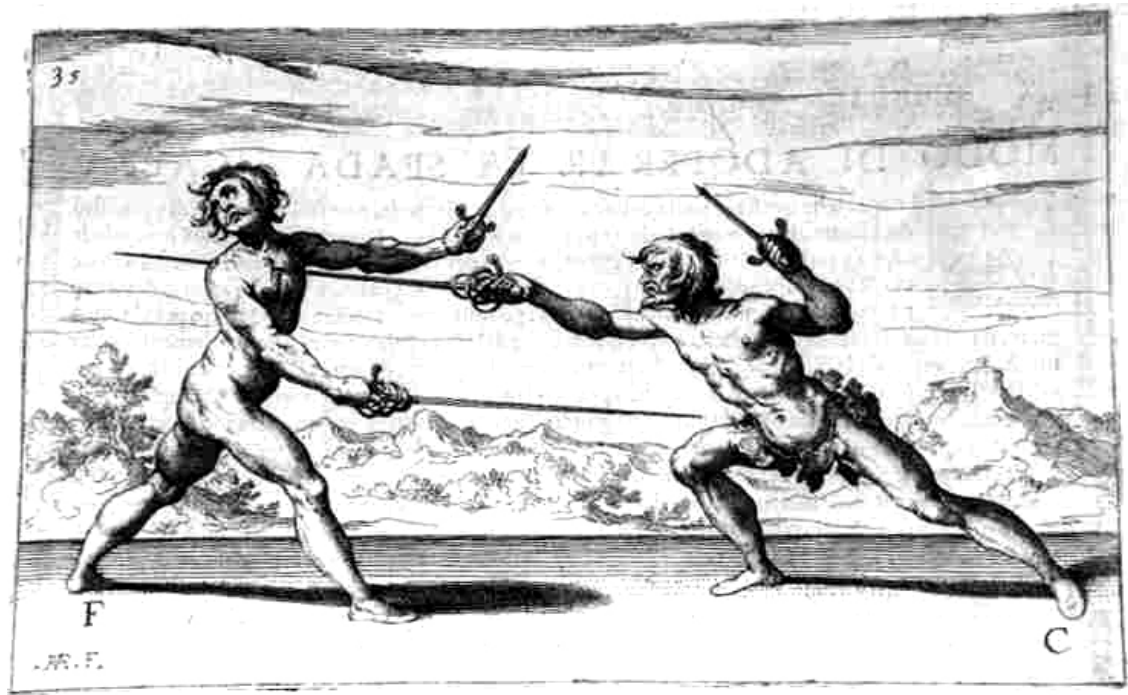


Figure that strikes with a thrust between the weapons into the chest disengaging it over the dagger while the adversary was being in wide guard, and lets the enemy arrive to measure. The adversary lying in fourth with his arm back, and with his dagger straight high and wide and with his arm extended, you will oppose him in extended third with your dagger crossed forward of your breast, and you will approach his dagger from the outside, he staying yet in his guard; once arrived, you will make the point of your sword even with his dagger, then you will disengage over in fourth, delivering to him a long stoccata into the breast.

## Chapter 20

# Of Further Techniques

## Rapier and Cloak - Plate 36



Method of employing the sword and cape.

To the end that this matter of the cape be better understood, it will perhaps not be out of place to explain some terms that must be used therewith. I tell you therefore that having the cape thereabout, it will be allowed to fall down off the right shoulder, to as far as the middle of the left arm, and then wrapping the left hand through outside, enveloping the arm in the said cape, putting oneself with it into third, or in some other guard as you like. Then, when stepping, that order will be obtained as is held with the sword and dagger, in order to be an identical progress, except that in parrying there is a difference. In that then, the cape can be cut, and punctured, which cannot occur to the dagger. And finding yourself in third, as above, at the encounter with your adversary, and he throws a mandritto at your head, you at the same time will step forward with your left foot, parrying against the forte of the enemys sword with your cape, giving him a thrust in his breast; one can also parry the said previous blow with the sword in guardia di testa accompanied by the cape, gathering in that tempo your left foot near to your right, and immediately advance with the right, and turn a mandritto to his head or leg; but when he throws either a mandritto or riverso to your leg, you will draw back your right foot somewhat, and if it be a mandritto, then give him a riverso to his sword arm; and if it be a riverso, then give him a dritto just in the said arm; but the true parry will be to parry with the sword and then in the striking to go to accompany the sword with the cape, with bumping into the enemys sword, and thus one will strike safely. Moreover I say that the following figures show the manner that one must hold to reach the sword to the adversary, in sword and cape from the inside.



## Rapier and Cloak - Plate 37



Figure that strikes from a counterdisengage from fourth into the face, parrying the enemys sword to the outside with the cape arm, as the adversary would disengage his sword in order to strike with a thrust. Your adversary being in fourth with his sword extended and high, you will give yourself to stringer it in fourth on the inside, with your cape arm under your forte; he wanting to disengage in order to strike you with a thrust in whatever manner he wills, parrying up with the cape, to the outside from your left side, and counterdisengaging from fourth, you will strike him in the face or wherever it will happen to be more convenient for you.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 38

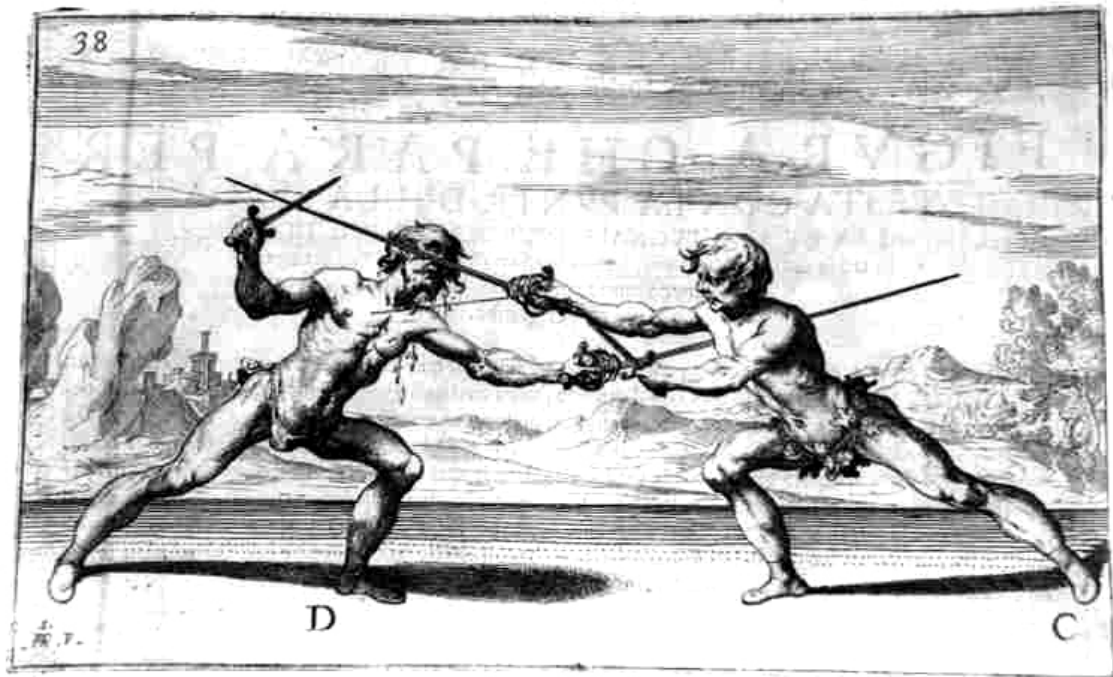


Figure that strikes with a strammazone riverso in the face of a left-hander and will also be able to strike in second into the breast, or alternately in fourth from the outside of the enemys sword during the disengage that his point makes in order to strike. The adversary, who will be left handed, lying in fourth with his arm extended, you will begin to stringer his sword on the inside in third, with your dagger high, and he disengaging in order to strike you in second in the face, you will be able to strike him in three manners: first, only lowering your dagger and parrying his sword you will strike him with a strammazone riverso in the face; alternately, in second in the chest; taking note, nonetheless, that during his disengage it will be better to strike him in fourth with your sword alone on the outside.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 39

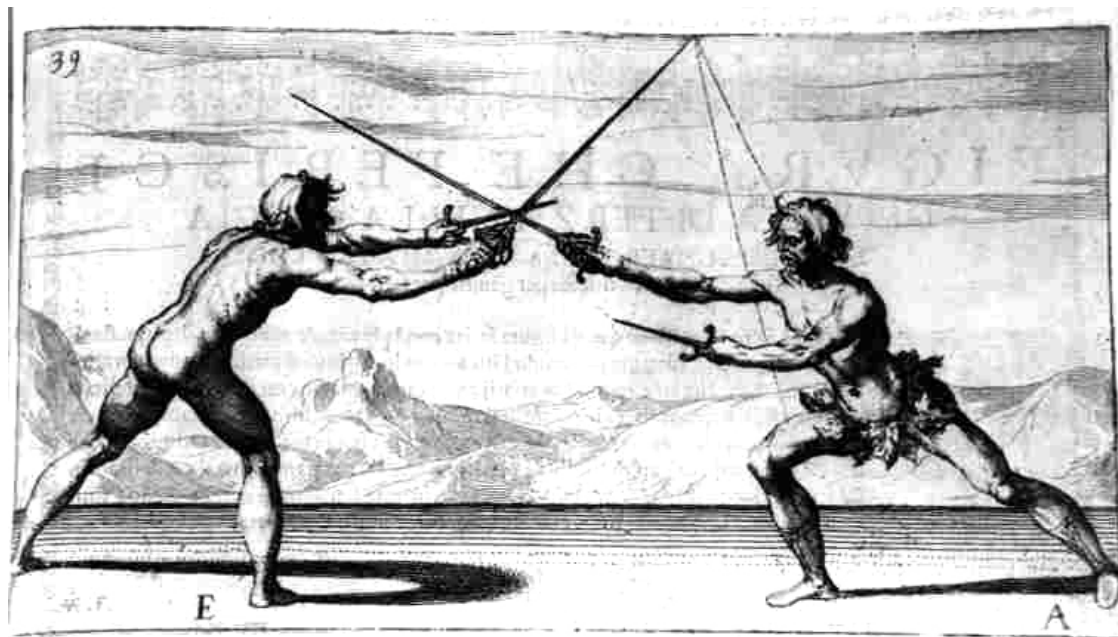


Figure that parries 'a blow to' the head with the point of the sword high and with the dagger crossed in the inside of his sword at the forte, so that the same will be able to strike in two manners, first with a thrust to the face, or alternately with a *riverso* to the leg. I would certainly have wronged myself, if this noble parry, or defense, I had not revealed to you, which defends, and saves such a noble part of the body; accordingly in this occasion I put forth to you the present figures, of whom one lies in first, and the other in fifth; and from fifth, only by raising his arm and turning his hand into fourth, advancing a step, he will have come to gain the sword on the inside against the adversary, and his enemy disengaging by turning under his enemys sword, he will have thrown a *dritto fendente* at the same, but the same only with turning his hand into second with the point high, putting the dagger to the rear on the forte of his sword, will be able to strike the adversary safely in two places, with a thrust in the face, and a cut in the leg, as the two lines descending from the point of the sword demonstrate well, the one falling to the head, and the other to the thigh.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 40

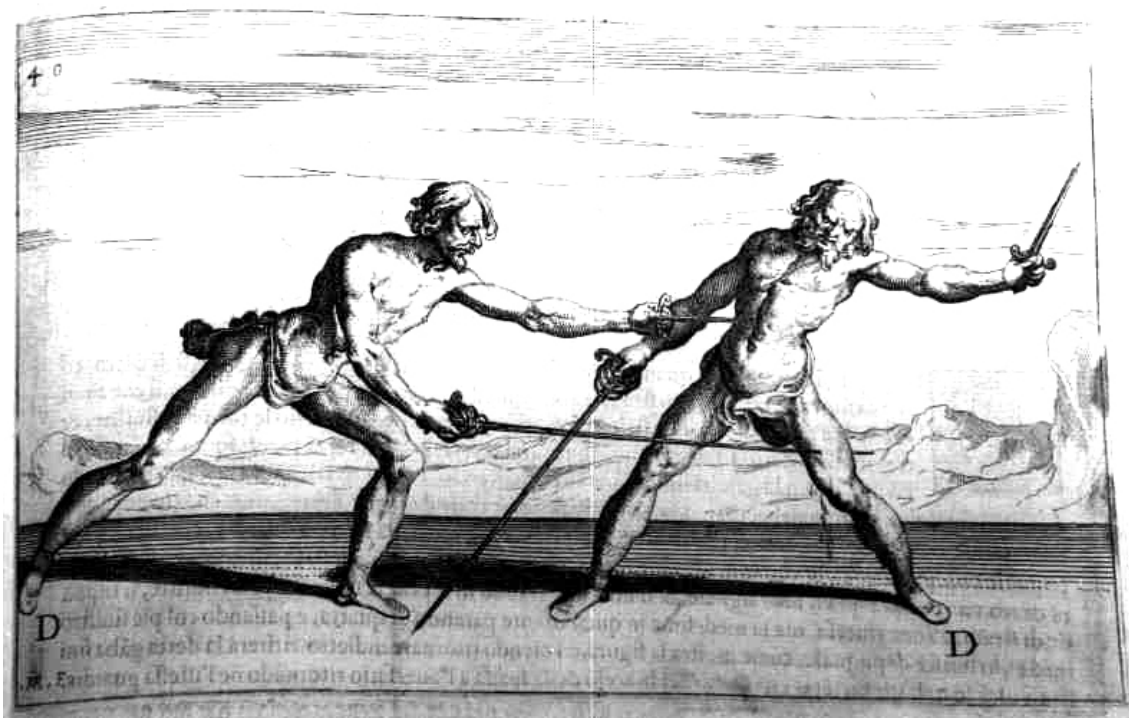


Figure that strikes with a thrust in third into the thigh and with the dagger into the body while the adversary disengages a reverso to the leg in order to strike. Because to some, seeing this following figure struck with the sword and also with the dagger, it will perhaps appear difficult, nevertheless putting the same technique to the test, it will turn out to be easy considering the representation; hence I say, that the adversaries, both lying in fourth, had the true edges of their swords touching each other and the points thereof each aimed at their adversarys face; the same was forced, pressing the enemys sword with his sword, so that feeling the adversary press, he resolves to turn a reverso to the leg, but the same in an instant lowered his sword, and turning his hand into third, passing with his left leg forward, strikes him, parrying with his sword, and likewise with his dagger, as this figure shows.

## Rapier and Dagger - Plate 41

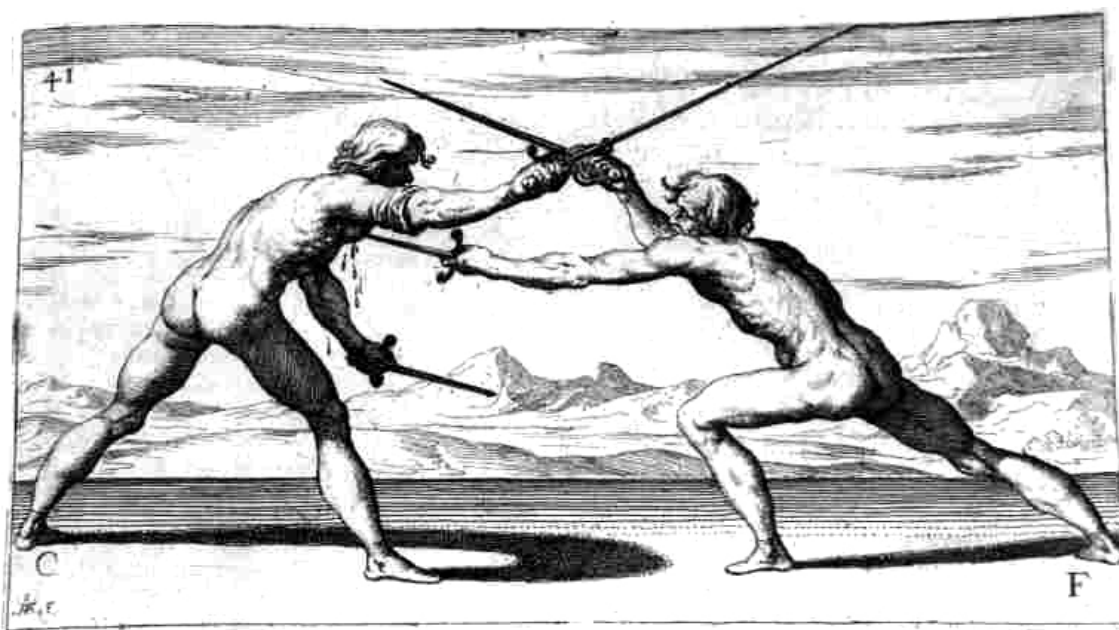
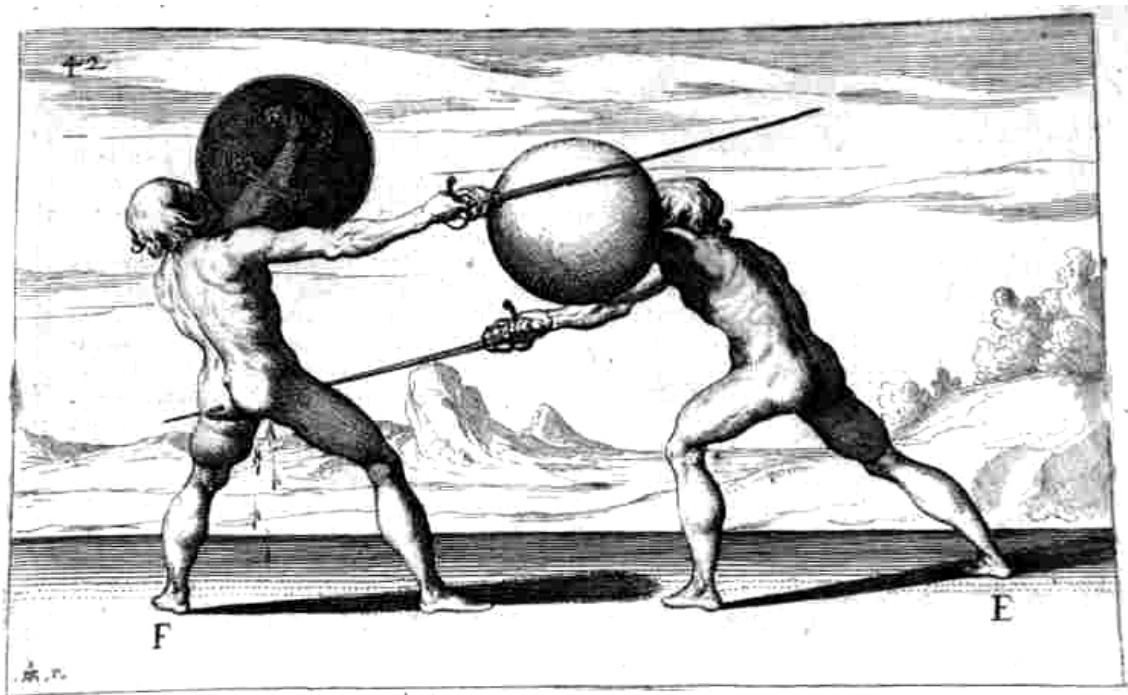


Figure that parries the stramazzone riverso with the sword and passes forward in an instant with the left foot, giving a stab under the right arm into the armpit. Because it is of great account when the adversary throws a thrust to parry it with the dagger, to the inside as to the outside, and turn a stramazzone riverso to the enemys sword arm, therefore when you have thrown a thrust at your adversary, and he has parried it inside, toward your left side, and throws at you the said stramazzone, you will parry with your sword in third to the outside, and passing forward with your left leg instantly, putting your dagger over the enemys sword you will strike him in second with a thrust in the chest. But by of the following figures, I say that the adversary lying in third with his dagger upon the forte of his sword, and the other in the sixth guard, with the dagger arm extended forward, and the sword somewhat low and retired to himself, the same being at measure will throw a thrust at him over his dagger, and the enemy parrying to the outside, toward his left side, responds with a stramazzone riverso, but the same in that instant parrying in fourth and passing forward with the left foot, strikes him with the dagger, as the figure shows, and wanting to return toward the rear, will retire his left leg, turning in the same tempo a riverso to the sword arm of the adversary, returning into the same guard.

## Rapier and Shield - Plate 42



Way of knowing how to avail oneself of the rotella, finding oneself confronted with another rotella.

Being that it often happens that ones own weapons wage war against him, who does not know how to avail himself well thereof, accordingly I have judged it to not be out of place to give an inkling of some details of the rotella, as a weapon most dangerous to those who have not had some practice with the same; and in consideration of such, one is to be advised that one must hold the rotella embraced with the left arm somewhat curved, in a way such that it faces somewhat toward the left side, but not so curved that it impedes the vision so that one could not discern any part of the enemy whatsoever; and having done thus, wanting to go to strike, the enemy lying with his sword extended in guardia stretta, it will be necessary first to stringer the enemys sword on the inside or the outside according to the occasion, and then advancing with the left foot, hit his already gained sword with your rotella, and strike him vigorously in third with a rising thrust. But if it occurred that the enemy lay in guardia larga, and that he threw a dritto or riverso to your leg, you would have to parry it with a falso, the dritto as well as the riverso, and then respond with a cut to the adversary in the leg; but if perchance he threw a thrust or a cut toward your face or head you could parry with the rotella when the cut or the thrust came not as a feint. But in order to protect yourself from the feint, being that the rotella is heavy so that it could not be of such quickness to parry, as could be done with a targa or brochieri, accordingly you will be careful not to parry in such a case with the rotella; the same figure wanting to parry a thrust which the adversary has thrown to the outside of his rotella, the same wishing to parry it will of course necessarily block his vision, and thus impeded, in that instant the enemy will have convenient opportunity to pass forward with his left foot and strike, without the motion of his sword being seen, into the breast or to the base of the body, as the figures show. But the same is to be parried in second or fourth with the sword, according to the occasion, and then advancing with the left foot, hitting the enemys sword with the rotella, one will strike with a rising thrust in third, and thus will be safer.

## Rapier and Shield - Plate 43



Figure that strikes under the rotella, while the adversary seeks to parry with the same rotella, in order to strike with a thrust in the chest. Considering the deceptions and feints that are found in arms, it is necessary to pay much attention when one comes to blows with his enemy, so through presentation of the following figures I show to you how parrying is most often harmful when one parries and does not respond in the same tempo; so I will demonstrate it to you in this action of the rotella, being that one of them lies in fifth with his arm perpendicular and with the point of his sword low, with the rotella forward of his breast, and the enemy lies in sixth with his rotella arm extended forward, and with his sword somewhat back, so that the same, if he will be accosted at measure, will throw a thrust outside the rotella to the face; and he raising his rotella to parry, the view will be obscured, and the same, falsing his sword under the rotella, strikes in fourth in the way that the figure shows. But if he had been a practiced person, when the adversary was throwing a thrust at his face, he would have parried, stretching out his rotella arm, and passing forward with his left foot, instantly with a bending of his body and head toward his right side, giving him a thrust in the breast; alternately, when the adversary was throwing the thrust, he could have parried with the sword in fourth, and in an instant passing forward with his left foot, and hitting the enemys sword with his rotella, he would strike him in third with a rising thrust in the body, and thus he would have been safe.

## Of some Terms of the Cut.

I had resolved myself to present to you some figures that would have shown you the way of using a cutting weapon, of parrying as well as striking, and in these actions to show you many effects, but considering this, that could have been done with figures, I can also do with these few admonitions, that I put to you, thus: the adversary lying in third or in fourth, so that the point of his sword is aimed at the middle of your body, you will place yourself counter to him in fourth with the point of your sword somewhat high, and crossed toward your right side, and approaching somewhat toward the adversaries sword, you will throw a dritto at his sword followed by a *riverso scendente* to his face; on the contrary, when your enemy will turn a *riverso* to your face, you will pass, parrying with your dagger in *guardia di faccia* over your right arm, giving him a thrust in third in his breast; alternately, having parried and passed as above, you will be able to give him a dritto to his leg, and moreover you will be able to parry the said *riverso* with your sword in fourth, as shows that figure, which strikes with the dagger under the arm of the adversary, and passing and parrying with the dagger, one will strike with a *riverso* to the leg, or with the dagger in the same way into the armpit; moreover, you will also be able to put yourself in fourth with the point of your sword low, showing him your body somewhat, and he coming from the outside to throw a thrust at you, you will parry upwards with the false edge of your sword, giving him a dritto to the face, being aware that the parry of the dritto, as well as the *riverso*, to the head, will be parried in the very same way, as that figure shows in which the sword parries, crossed with the dagger at the rear upon the forte of the sword, which has two lines, one falling to the face, and the other to the thigh; and upon the occasion, that the adversary throws at you either a dritto or *riverso* to the lower parts, you will parry in second with the point of your sword low, and if it will be a dritto, you will parry and disengage with the (true) edge, over the enemys sword, putting your dagger over the said sword, giving him a *riverso* to the arm; and if it will be a *riverso*, you will parry to the outside, in the same way, giving him a thrust in the breast, putting nonetheless your dagger in the same tempo over the adversaries sword; and this is as much concerning thereof that occurs to me to say.



# **Secure Way of defending Onself from every sort of Blow.**

Wanting to put an end to this, my work, it does not seem to be to be out of place to seal it with this brief discourse of mine, which consists only of demonstrating the virtue and the action of the first and fourth guards, discovering in first the offense, and in fourth the defense, the beginning and end of whatever honored scheme one wills; considering that fourth defends against any blow, resolute or irresolute, and first offends the adversary, accordingly it is necessary to say (for the two to be faithful companions) that the beginning of the one is the end of the other, and thus, without beginning and end they evade beginning and ending, since the first begins from high and finishes in a somewhat low fourth, and this is for two reasons.

First, that if the adversary throws a thrust or a cut, passing somewhat with the left foot, in parrying with a *riverso* toward the right side of the adversary, advancing the right foot, he can strike with an *imbrocata* in the chest, and by such an end, one returns into fourth guard. Second, because the adversary cannot offend if not to the right side, which can easily be defended with an *ascendente* from the said fourth, demonstrating nonetheless in these actions boldness in the face, the eye quick to recognize the uncovered and covered parts of the adversary, strength and speed in the legs, arms, and hands, quickness in parrying and striking, and agility in the body, and this is the nature of the first and fourth guards.