

THE FIORE TRANSLATION
PROJECT

THE SWORD IN ONE HAND



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INTRODUCTION



The Fiore Translation Project is a series of blog posts in which I translate and comment on *Il Fior di Battaglia*, the treatise written by Fiore dei Liberi, arguably the greatest master of knightly combat instruction of the fourteenth century. In this free handout I have lightly edited the posts, and reorganised them where appropriate- for example, the section on the four different manuscripts was produced in response to a comment on one of the posts, and so was published in between two of the translation posts. It makes more sense to put it at the beginning, as it is really an introduction to Fiore's legacy.

I have left in some of the personal discursive matter, but edited out the post opening and closing remarks as they make no sense when the material is not formatted as a blog post. I hope you find this useful and interesting. Please bear in mind a couple of things:

- 1) This is released under a Creative Commons Attribution licence. You may do anything you like with the material, so long as you acknowledge where it came from. Please feel free to share this around, send it to your friends, print it out and scribble on it, go nuts.

- 2) The video links are included so that you can see how I do the

actions Fiore described. These are not instructional videos, and if you choose to try things out, it's entirely at your own risk. I take no responsibility for you unless you are under my direct supervision.

3) In case you are reading this on a print-out, I have added all video links in text form, so you can type them into a browser. I've not done that for the other hyperlinks.

So without further ado, here's how it began:

* * *

It's that take-stock time of year, and 2018 has been a monster.

I've spent a lot of time this year producing finished products, starting with:

- The Theory and Practice of Historical Martial Arts
- The Art of Sword Fighting in Earnest
- The Essential Rapier Course
- The Rapier: Part One: Beginners Workbook
- The Rapier, Part Two: Completing the Basics
- I also completed my PhD and graduated in July.

I also have the first draft of *The Rapier, Part Three: Developing Skills* complete. Part Four, Rapier and Dagger, is ready in my head, and I have similar workbook series planned for Longsword (the sections of the sword out of armour from Fiore), Armizare (Longsword focussed, but interleaved with abrazare and dagger training, the way I teach in class), and even the provisionally-titled Jumppa series (which is Finnish for 'exercise done to get fit'), which will cover the breathing, flexibility, strength, power, and stamina exercises I use. That's a LOT of stuff to have in your head, so I imagine 2019 will involve a lot of publishing!

The problem with all this rampant productivity is that a lot of the work done to get these projects finished, published, and into your waiting hands has *nothing* to do with researching swordsmanship and getting better at fencing and teaching. So it *feels* like I

haven't really done much this year, because I haven't learned much new about my art. I've clarified my thinking on *how to train* quite a bit, in the writing of *Developing Skills*, but other than that, I can't think of a single research breakthrough or magical new insight into the Art of Arms.

This is unacceptable.

* * *

So I have had a thought. While I was in Seattle, I had a conversation with the excellent Michael Chidester, of Wiktenauer fame, and we agreed that the world needs a new, free, translation of Fiore's Getty Ms. There is nothing wrong with the current published translation by Tom Leoni, but it a) isn't free and b) in the interests of making the translation very clear, Tom tends towards over-simplifying the text.

* * *

I've never written my own translation of Fiore before, though I have the book clear in my head, partly because it's a monster of a project. I know if I start at the beginning (the introduction), and work my way steadily through the whole book, I'll get stuck, lose interest, and the project will fail. It's too big. So my intention is to go through the bits I'm most interested in first, and transcribe, translate, and comment on them as I go. I have no idea how long it will take to get through the whole book- especially as I fully intend to transcribe and translate the related sections of the other Fiorean manuscripts at the same time, as the whimsy takes me. This will hopefully generate a lot of useful material for scholars of the Art, and so I'll be posting the material up on my blog as I go, under a Creative Commons Attribution licence- in other words you can use it for any purpose whatsoever, including commercial projects, free, so long as you say where you got it from.

My process is simple: I pick a section, and transcribe one para-

graph of Fiore's text, straight from the manuscript, and translate it, make whatever comments seem interesting to me, then move on to the next. At the end of a section I'll comment on the section as a whole, and how I think it fits into the rest of the book, the other manuscripts, and any related texts and systems. It would be both academically unsound, and foolish, not to make use of the existing translations and transcriptions, so when I get stuck, I'll check the wiktenauer transcriptions and translation (by Colin Hatcher), and Tom's, to see how they have solved the problem. I don't always agree, of course! Please note I will not be doing a comparative translation- this is not a response to their work, it's a separate project. If there is interest, I might pick a paragraph and compare my, Tom's, and Colin's versions, so you can see where we differ, but that would be a one-off. But you should be aware that this project owes a debt to their work.

Also, I'll be referring to the page numbers in the manuscript(s) in a way that may be unfamiliar to lay readers. A page of a manuscript is a 'folio', and it has two sides. The one on the right hand side is called the 'recto', and the one on the left when you turn the page is the 'verso'. So a page reference will be something like f23r, which means 'folio 23, recto side'. Also it is worth noting that the pagination in general use and which I am using here is different to that employed by the Getty museum; because the first page has a "3" written into the corner, we number the treatise from page three onwards; the Getty numbers the pages from the first extant page.

ABOUT THE MANUSCRIPTS



One very good question that came up in the comments on my Fiore Translation project, is why focus on the Getty MS? It's the manuscript that's had the most attention, the most work done on it. Why not focus on the Pisani Dossi, the Morgan, or the Florius?

In case you are new to this, let me explain what those things are...

To quote from *The Medieval Longsword*, pages 5-6:

The four surviving copies of Fiore's manuscripts are:

Il Fior di Battaglia (MS Ludwig XV13), held in the J. P. Getty museum in Los Angeles. "The Getty", as it is generally known, covers wrestling, dagger, dagger against sword, longsword, sword in armour, pollax, spear, lance on horseback, sword on horseback and wrestling on horseback. The text includes detailed instructions for the plays. Regarding dating, in this manuscript Fiore mentions a duel between Galeazzo da Mantova and Jean le Maingre (Boucicault), which we know took place in 1395. He does not mention Galeazzo's death, which occurred in 1406 (a crossbow bolt in the eye at Medolago). So it seems likely that the manuscript was written

between 1395 and 1406. The treatise was published in facsimile by Massimo Malipiero in 2006, and a full translation into English was published by Tom Leoni in 2009.

Flos Duellatorum, in private hands in Italy, but published in facsimile in 1902 by Francesco Novati. “The Novati” or “the Pisani-Dossi” follows more or less the same order and has more or less the same content as the Getty. The main differences are that the spear section comes between the dagger and the sword, and the dagger against sword material is at the end. The text is generally far less specific than in the Getty, but it is the only version that is dated by the author, who states that he is writing on February 10th 1409 (1410 by modern reckoning). He also states that he has been studying for 50 years, which would put his date of birth around 1350, assuming he began training at the usual age of 10 or 12.

Il Fior di Battaglia (Morgan MS M 383), “The Morgan”, held in the Pierpont Morgan museum in New York, proceeds more like a passage of arms: first comes mounted combat with lance, sword, and unarmed; then on foot, spear, sword in armour, sword out of armour, and sword against dagger. There is no wrestling or dagger combat shown except against a sword, though they are mentioned in the introduction. I conclude that the manuscript is incomplete. Most of the specific plays shown here are also in the Getty, and these have almost identical texts.

Florius de Arte Luctandi (MSS LATIN 11269), recently discovered in the Bibliotheque Nationale Francaise in Paris, is probably a later copy. “Florius” has Latin text and is beautifully coloured. It follows the approximate order of the Morgan, though is more complete, containing all the sections seen in the Getty and the Novati.

It is much easier when dealing with multiple versions of the same source to pick one as your main focus and refer to the others when necessary. Most scholars working on Fiore agree that the Getty is the most useful source, since it is as complete as any other, and has the fuller, more explanatory, text.

The Medieval Longsword (<https://guywindsor.net/blog/book/the->

medieval-longsword/) came out in 2014, so unsurprisingly it doesn't refer to the most recent major Fiore publication, *Flowers of Battle volume one*, by Tom Leoni and Gregory Mele. I've reviewed that book [here](#).

My goal in studying Fiore is primarily to understand how sword fights work. I am a martial artist first, historian second. From that perspective, it makes sense to focus on the most complete version of the book (which would rule out the Morgan), with the best illustrations and the most complete, explanatory, text. The Getty is the only sensible choice.

But, and this is a very large but, it would be very foolish not to take advantage of the other sources. Here's how I see them:

The Morgan

You can download a copy [here](#).

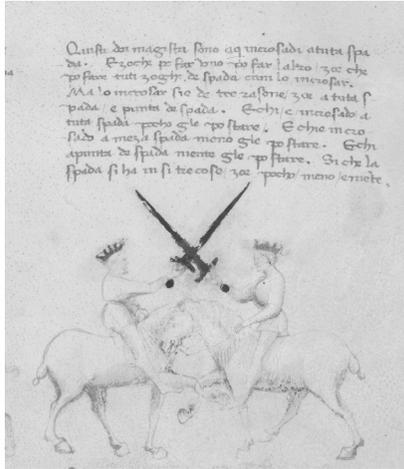
The first thing to note is that the Morgan starts with the lance on horseback, and proceeds in the reverse order to the Getty. This means the book is following the order of a passage of arms, rather than the (probably) best pedagogical order.

It is also sadly incomplete. Though the introduction mentions dagger, for example, the book ends at the play of the sword in one hand.

The ms has been rebound out of order. I would order it like so: Folia 1-14 are correct. There's a page missing after 14, then the order should go: 16, 15, 18, 17, [page missing], 19, [rest of ms missing if it ever existed].

Where we have the same plays and actions, the text for the Morgan is remarkably similar to the Getty. This is uncontroversial; you can check the transcriptions on Wiktenauer [here](#).

To my mind the Morgan is principally useful for the one key theoretical insight it offers: the play of the sword on horseback showing the crossing of the swords, and this text:



Quisti doi magistri sono aqui incrosadi a tuta spada. E zoche po far uno por far l'altro, zoe che po fare tuti zoghi de spada cum lo incrosar. Ma lo incrosar sie de tre rafone, zoe a tuta spada e punta de spada. E chi e incrosado a tuta spada pocho gle po stare. E chi'e incrosado a meza spada meno gle po stare. E chi a punta de spada niente gle po stare. Si che la spada si ha in si tre cose, zoe, pocho, meno, e niente.

These two masters are here crossed *a tutta spada* (“at the whole sword”). And what one can do the other can do, thus [they] can do all the plays of the sword with the crossing. But the crossing is of three kinds, thus *a tuta spada* (at the whole sword) and *a punta de spada* (“at the point of the sword”). [Note the inconsistency here: he says ‘of three kinds’, but mentions only two at this point.] And he who is crossed *a tuta spada*, little can he stand. And he who is crossed *a meza spada* (at the middle of the sword), less can he stand. And he who is crossed *a punta de spada*, nothing can he stand. So the sword has three things in it, thus: little, less, and nothing.

This is of course a matter of leverage: when the crossing is near the hilt (*a tutta spada*), you have some strength, you can stand, withstand, support, or hold, a little. At the middle, less, and at the point, nothing. Please note, fencers with a more modern background (shall we say, from 1550 onwards), will be leaping up and down in excite-

ment because in more modern systems, generally featuring swords with more complex, hand-protecting, hilts, parries are done with what Fiore would call the *tuta spada* against the *punta di spada*. Or what rapierists would call the *forte* against the *debole*, and smallswordists the *fort* against the *feeble* (or *foible*). But, please note, in *every single case where Fiore describes the blade relationship at the parry, he specifies middle to middle*. This is, I think, for two reasons. Firstly, with an open-hilted sword, you cannot afford to put your hand so close to the enemy blade, you must parry further down the sword. Secondly, parries are not done as a gentle but firm closings of the line; they are *rebattimenti*, beating actions. The *tuta spada* is not moving fast enough to hit with enough force to beat the opponent's weapon aside.

The Florius

You can see scans of this ms on the Wiktenauer page [here](#).

Ken Mondschein has published a paper on it [here](#). This is one of those “Fiore scholars, you have no choice, you have to read this” moments. It’s basically everything we know about Fiore, his life, and a lot of fascinating insights into his patrons and milieu. Plus, it’s even free. Go read it.

As I see it, The Florius is a very pretty, but not very useful, version of the book. I paid the Bibliotheque nationale Francaise about a thousand euros for the scans (which I’m not allowed to share, because they are a tight-fisted lot at that institution, but they’ve now put them online, see above), and while I don’t regret that, it didn’t actually change a single thing I was doing in class. No new techniques or concepts. The artwork is stylised to the point where it’s not a usable reference source, and the text is as short and even less helpful than the Pisani-Dossi. As Ken wrote “the Paris manuscript changes the source material so considerably, and in a manner so consistent with it originating in the court of Leonello d’Este, Marquis of Ferrara, that we must consider it almost a separate work.” Scholars need to know about it, and study it to some

degree, but martial artists can move swiftly on. Again, if I've missed something, let me know!

The Pisani-Dossi

You can download a high quality scan of the 1902 edition of this manuscript from [here](#).

There is a clique of Fiore scholars that remember the bad old days when a very poor photocopy of the Pisani-Dossi ms, with extremely bad English translations pasted over the original text, was the ONLY version of *Il Fior di Battaglia* that we had.

Seriously. That was it.

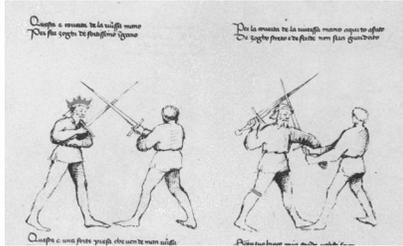
No wonder we struggled. I first saw this in 1994, and felt totally justified in keeping smallsword as my main focus. By the early 2000s, we had *heard* of the Getty, but it was almost impossible to see a copy. I blagged some not-very-clear scans in 2003, and better ones in 2005. In 2006 we saw full-res scans for the first time, when Brian Stokes gave a lecture on them at the WMAW event in Dallas. Oh my, did we get excited. We saw the first micro-filmed scans of the Morgan in about 2002, and better images became available by about 2010. As for the Pisani-Dossi, a decent quality un-messed-about-with pdf became available in about 2002. Halleluliah.

Now do you understand me when I say you don't know how lucky you are?

To be clear, the version we are all working from is the facsimile made by Francesco Novati and published in 1902. The original is in the Pisani-Dossi family vault, and to date has been seen only by Brian Stokes, because it is basically impossible to arrange a viewing: it requires all the heirs of the family (who do not get on) to be present for the vault to be opened. However, as far as we know, the facsimile is accurate (according to Brian).

This ms is as complete as the Getty, but as we will see in the discussion of the sword in one hand master, the text is much less useful, generally. However, as will also see there, it does include some illustrations and plays that add significant depth to our under-

standing. Especially noteworthy is the crossing of the sword in zogho stretto *from the roverso side*, shown here:



Questa e coverta de la riverssa mano

Per far zoghi de fortissimo ingano

This is a cover from the backhand side,

To make plays of the greatest trickery.

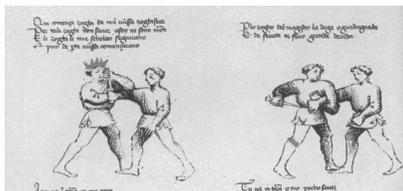
Per la coverta de la riverssa mano acqui to afato

De zogho stretto e de ferire non fera guardito

By the cover of the backhand side I have got you here

You can't defend yourself against the close plays or the strikes.

I am also jolly fond of the third master of the dagger from this ms; it has a gloriously fun disarm:



Qui comenca zoghi de mi riverssa zoghi forti

Per tali zoghi non savez asay ne sono morti

E li zoghi li mie scholari seguizano

E pur de parte riverssa comenzazano.

Here begin the plays of my strong backhand plays
By these plays you don't know how many have died,
And the plays of my scholars that follow
And only of the backhand side, they begin.

*Per lo zogho del magistro la daga o guadagnada
E de ferirte te fazo grande derada.*

By the play of the master I have gained the dagger
And by striking you I'll cause you great discombobulation.

Sorry, I couldn't resist. The non-technical smack-talk cries out for non-technical language play. "Derada" is not exactly discombobulation, but the sense is the same.

One of the principal reasons I include this play in my Dagger Disarm Flowdrill, part of my basic syllabus for Armizare, is to specifically refer to the Pisani-Dossi, to make sure all of my students are aware that there is more than one copy of the source.

Let me just make the point about the text very clear. Here is the Pisani-Dossi version of the Exchange of the thrust:

*Aquesto e de punta un crudelle schanbiar
In l'arte piu falsa punta de questa non se po far.
Tu me trasisti de punta e questa io to dada
E piu seguro se po far schivando la strada.*

Here is a cruel exchange of the thrust,
In the art you cannot do a more false [deceptive] thrust than this,
You came to strike me with at thrust and I did this to you,

And [to be] more secure you can go avoiding [out of] the way.

And now the same play from the Getty ms:

*Questo zogho si chiama scambiar de punta e se fa per tal modo zoe.
Quando uno te tra una punta subito acresse lo tuo pe ch'e denanci fora de
strada e cum l'altro pe passa ala traversa anchora fora di strada
traversando la sua spada cum cum gli toi brazzi bassi e cum la punta de la
tua spada erta in lo volto o in lo petto com'e depento.*

This play is called the exchange of thrust, and it is done like this, thus. When one strikes a thrust at you immediately advance your foot that is in front out of the way and with the other foot pass also out of the way, crossing his sword with with your arms low and with the point of your sword up in the face or in the chest as is pictured.

You can see then that one is general, and the other very specific. If you want to know which foot to move where, there's only one ms that will tell you, and is also complete.

So, for anyone wanting to recreate Fiore's art, there is only one sensible choice of source to focus on. But, and it's a big but, you should also be intimately familiar with the Pisani-Dossi, and the Morgan, and at least aware of the existence of the Florius.

While we're here, it may be useful to cover the overall contents of the Getty. Quoting from pages 8-13 of *The Medieval Longsword*:

The Structure of *il Fior di Battaglia*

Il Fior di Battaglia is a vast and complex treatise, covering an enormous range of weapons combinations, techniques, counters, and fundamental concepts. As it was written around 1410, it comes from a different cultural and educational background from ours, one in which memory training was fundamental. As a result, the lack of theoretical discussion in the work, and the way the

information is presented, can present stumbling blocks to the modern reader. The sheer amount of information is daunting, and as it is spread over some 90-odd sides of vellum (conventionally numbered 1 to 47 recto and verso) keeping the structure clear in your head as you read can be difficult, so I'll lay it out for you. The first three written sides (p. 3 recto and verso, p. 4 recto) are taken up with a text-only introduction. This covers the following points:

- A brief autobiography of Fiore himself
- A list of his more famous students and some of their feats of arms
 - A brief discussion of the secret nature of the art, and Fiore's opinions about different modes of combat (fighting armoured in the lists versus fighting in arming doublets with sharp swords)
 - A further description of Fiore's training, and his opinions regarding the necessity of books in general for mastering the art
 - A connection of Fiore himself and the book with a higher authority (Nicolo, Marquis of Este) who commissioned the work
 - An overview of the book and its didactic conventions, beginning with some background information on wrestling, and advice to the student on what is required
 - Discussion of *poste* (the guard positions used in this art)
 - A description of a crown and garter convention by which one can tell at a glance who is winning the fight in any given image.

This last is critically important to following what is going on in the treatise, so I'll expand on it here. The figures that begin each section are shown standing in guard, and wear a crown to indicate their masterly status. They are the "first masters". Following them are one or more "remedy masters" (also called the "second masters"), who illustrate a defence against an attack. Following each of them in turn are their scholars, who are identified by a garter, who execute the techniques that follow the previous master's remedy. After a scholar or master may come a "counter-remedy master" (the "third master"), wearing a crown and a garter, who illustrates the counter to that remedy, or to a specific scholar. Occasionally, there is a fourth master, who may be called the

“counter-counter-remedy master”, who wears the crown and garter too. Fiore specifies that most sequences don’t get beyond the third master (i.e. the attack is met by the remedy, which the attacker counters), and it is perilous (perhaps because it is insecure) to go beyond three or four. This visual convention is unique to Fiore as far as we know, and makes it easy to be sure who is supposed to win from any illustrated position, and what stage of the fight (principle or guard; defence; counter to the defence; counter to the counter) is being shown. When reading the treatise, you can immediately identify who is winning in a given picture by his bling—the most bling wins!

The finish to the introduction is particularly interesting: “The coloured letters, the illustrations and the plays will show you all the art clearly enough for you to understand it.” In other words, this book should be enough to transmit the art completely. A bold claim, and one that is borne out I think, once the conventions are understood.

Weapon by Weapon: the Sections of the Manuscript

The manuscript is divided into sections, which are linked together. The primary divisions (mentioned in the title of the Pisani-Dossi) are on foot, on horseback, in armour and out of armour. The secondary divisions are by weapon. We begin on foot, out of armour:

- Abrazare: wrestling. This has one remedy master, and a total of twenty plays. The first sixteen are unarmed, then come two with a short stick (bastoncello), and two with the stick against the dagger, connecting us to

- Dagger: this is a huge section, with 76 plays, divided up amongst nine remedy masters. This is followed by defence of the dagger against the sword, and hence

- Sword in one hand: this contains one remedy master followed by eleven plays, which will be detailed later in this book. They lead us to

- The sword in two hands: this starts with a description of

footwork, then six different ways to hold and use the sword, then twelve guards. The plays are divided into

- Zogho largo, wide play: 20 plays, including two remedy masters
- Zogho stretto, close play: 23 plays deriving from a single remedy master, which is followed by
- Defence from sword guards on the left side—a single remedy master, with no scholars, who is followed by
- Staff and dagger against spear, and two clubs and a dagger against spear. This seems to finish the unarmoured material (though some of the dagger plays required armour).

There follows:

- The segno page, or “seven swords”; a memory map for the system as a whole, and illustrating the four virtues required for success in the Art.

From here on, we are mostly in armour:

- Sword in armour—six guard positions, one remedy master, one counter-remedy master, and a total of sixteen plays.
- Pollax—again six guard positions, eight plays with no specific remedy master, and two more showing variations on the axe: one with a weight on a rope, the other with a box of poison dust on the end. This is followed by the:
- Spear—first we see three guards on the right, one play and one counter-remedy, then three guards on the left, and one play.

And finally, mounted combat:

- Lance—five plays, each with their own master, including one counter-remedy,
- Lance against sword—five plays, including three counter-remedies.
- Sword—one guard position, shown against two attacks, with nine plays.
- Abrazare—seven plays including three counter-remedies.

- On foot with ghiaverina, a type of spear, against mounted opponents, one master followed by two plays.
- Lance and rope—a last play of lance against lance, showing a specific trick for dismounting an opponent.
- Sword against sword—a last, probably allegorical, play, in which you chase your opponent back to his castle, in which his villainous friends are waiting.

In this book [i.e. *The Medieval Longsword*] we shall confine ourselves mostly to the three sections of the sword on foot, unarmoured. This does not suggest that these sections are somehow a standalone treatise; on the contrary, understanding them has required many readings of the entire manuscript, and exhaustive recreation of the entire system on foot. The sections complement and reinforce each other: when a longsword pommel strike comes in, treat it like a dagger attack: when you end up too close to use your pollax, use the wrestling plays. There is much to learn about the spear from the plays of the sword, and so on. I have left out the plays in armour simply because most readers will not have access to a complete harness, and there is no point doing armoured plays without it. Likewise, we should not imagine that the work is done: there remain (in other sections) plays that have not yet been convincingly interpreted by anyone, and the mounted combat material is beyond the scope of any but the very best riders, with highly trained horses.

In any given section there will usually be one or more “remedy masters” wearing a crown, illustrating the defence against a particular attack. These are followed by scholars, wearing a garter, who complete the play of the previous master. There are often also counter-remedy masters, wearing a crown and a garter, which counter either the scholar that comes before them, or the master himself. In other words their action may be specific to one scholar, or more generally applicable to the remedy itself.

The plays are the illustrations of the techniques, so a picture of a player (wearing no crown or garter) getting beaten by a master, scholar, or counter-remedy master. One technical sequence, such as

a parry and strike, might take up one, two or three such illustrations, each of which is a play. As the term implies, there is often a lot of “play” in the execution of these techniques, and several different ways to enter into a given play. Fiore scholars tend to keep the key plays in memory, in the order that they appear in the Getty MS. It has become the norm to refer to the plays by their number—such as “the third play of the second master of zogho largo”. This is more useful than saying “p. 25 verso, bottom left illustration”, because it puts the play into its context. It is also how Fiore himself refers to the plays. In this numbering system, the illustration showing the master is the first play, and all the images that follow him, up to the next master, are numbered two, three, etc. This makes it very easy to find the play referred to—simply find the right master (wearing a crown and no garter), and count from there. So when reading this book, if you keep a copy of the treatise handy, you should be able to find the source for every technique I describe.

If you don't have a copy of *The Medieval Longsword*, you can get one here:

The Medieval Longsword

I hope that's made it clear where I'm coming from, and given you some insight into the currently known copies of the treatise.

THE MASTER OF THE SWORD IN ONE HAND



Let us begin with the sword in one hand. You'll notice several things: this is clearly first-draft work, and I haven't found the accents shortcuts on my keyboard. The transcription is not supposed to be flawless, just clear enough that where the text could be transcribed in more than one way, you can see which I've chosen. I'm better at apostrophes: mostly I've distinguished between *che* (that) and *ch'e* (that is) in the transcription. I'm expanding all contractions and abbreviations as well, but I'm not worrying too much about the punctuation. Fiore uses it quite inconsistently anyway, so I'm tossing in commas and full stops where I think they probably belong. I'm also including accidental repeats of words, crossed-out words, and other errors, because they're interesting. It's not my job to correct the master.

F20r



This folio has the last of the sword against dagger plays (top left), a blank space where the second illustration would normally go, and then the first two pieces of the sword in one hand section. I'll start there:

Noy semo tre zugadori che volemo alcider questo magistro. Uno gli de trare di punta. L'altro di taglio, l'altro vole batt lancare la sua spada contra lo ditto magistro. Si che ben sara grande fatto ch'ello non sia morto, che dio lo faza ben tristo.

We are three players that want to kill this master. One by striking with a thrust. The other with a cut, the other wants to ~~hit~~ throw his sword against the said master. It will be a great feat if he is not killed, that God makes very sad.

This is quite clear, I think. Three players, each representing the thrust, cut, or thrown sword. The last sentence is basically smack-talk.

Above the Master, the text reads:

Voy seti cativi e di quest'arte savete pocho. Fate gli fatti che parole non ano loco. Vegna a uno a uno chi sa fare e po. Che se voi fossi cento tutti vi guastero per questa guardia ch'e chossi bona e forte. Io acresco lo pe che'e denanci un pocho fora de strada e cum lo stancho io passo ala traversa. E in quello passare mi crovo rebattendo le spade ve trovo discoverti. E de ferire vi faro cetni. E si lanza o spadad me ven alanzada, tutte le rebatto chome to ditto passonda fuora di strada. Secondo che vedreti li miei zochi qui dreto. De guardagli che vin prego. E pur cum spada a una mano faro mia arte como vedrete in queste carte.

I'll just re-arrange the layout of the text so the versification is clear (this is rough- better literature scholars feel free to make corrections! I've paid more attention to rhymes than syllable count, because Fiore seems to: I don't see the common eleven syllable (*endecasillabo*) or seven (*settenario*) lines. If poetry forms aren't your're thing, this may be useful:

“The hendecasyllable (Italian: *endecasillabo*) is the principal metre in Italian poetry. Its defining feature is a constant stress on the tenth syllable, so that the number of syllables in the verse may vary, equaling eleven in the usual case where the final word is stressed on the penultimate syllable. The verse also has a stress preceding the caesura, on either the fourth or sixth syllable. The first case is called *endecasillabo a minore*, or lesser hendecasyllable, and has the first hemistich equivalent to a *quinario*; the second is called *endecasillabo a maggiore*, or greater hendecasyllable, and has a *settenario* as the first hemistich” from Wikipedia.

*Voy seti cativi e di quest'arte savete pocho.
 Fate gli fatti che parole non ano loco.
 Vegna a uno a uno chi sa fare e po.
 Che se voi fossi cento tutti vi guastero
 per questa guardia ch'e chossi bona e forte.
 Io acresco lo pe che'e denanci
 un pocho fora de strada*

e cum lo stancho io passo ala traversa.
E in quello passare mi crovo rebattendo
le spade ve trovo discoverti. [This has been corrected in the ms,
from discoverte]
E de ferire vi faro certi.
E si lanza o spada me ven alanzada,
tutte le rebatto chome t'ò
ditto passando fuora di strada.
Segondo che vedreti li miei zochi qui dreto.
De guardagli che vin prego.
E pur cum spada a una mano faro mia arte
como vedrete in queste carte.

It's worth bearing in mind that Fiore is writing in verse. For a whimsical take on this, see my *Armizare Vade Mecum*, a collection of mnemonic verses for learning Fiore's art.

You'll notice that I am not modernising any spellings, but I am expanding abbreviations, and where I remember to do it, adding the essential apostrophes. *Che* is "that", *ch'e* is "that is". Transcription is hard though, so feel free to call me on any errors.

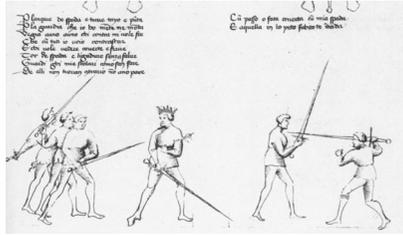
Now the translation:

You are thugs and of this art you know little. Do your deeds, words have no place. Come one by one, who can do it, and even if you were 100, I'd smash you with this guard that is so good and strong. I advance the foot that is in front a little out of the way, and with the left I pass across. And in that pass I cross beating the swords, I'll find you uncovered, and will make certain to strike. And if a lance or sword is thrown at me, I'll beat them all away as I said, passing out of the way. Just as you see in my plays that follow. Take a look at them, if you please. And still with the sword in one hand I make my art, as you see in these pages.

The meaning of *cativi* is clear- Leoni has "poltroons"; it could also be villains, thugs, low bad fellows. Also naughty people ("sei

una ragazza cattiva?” means “are you a naughty girl?” don’t ask me how I know that). I’ve used ‘thugs’ because it fits the meaning, and the sense of ‘untrained’, and ‘rough’.

Let’s just compare this to the Pisani-Dossi, carta 13a:



*Per lancare de spada e trare tayo e punta
 Per la guardia che io ho niente me monta
 Vegno auno auno chi contra mi vole far
 Che cum tuti io voio contrastar
 E chi vole vedere coverte e ferire
 Tor de spada e ligadure senza falire
 Guardi gli mie scolari come fan fare
 Se elli non trovario contrario non ano pare*

By throws of the sword and striking cut and thrust
 By this guard that I have nothing overcomes me
 Come one by one, whoever wants to oppose me
 And with all I wish to stand against
 And whoever wishes to see covers and strikes,
 Disarms, and locks without fail,
 Watch my scholars how they do them,
 If you do not find a counter they have no equal.

The overall meaning is the same, but it is missing the specific instructions regarding the footwork.

Readers of *Advanced Longsword, Form and Function* (pages 84-86) will know how I view this section; it’s kind of a ‘if you’ve only got a couple of days to teach someone how to survive a duel, do this’. I do

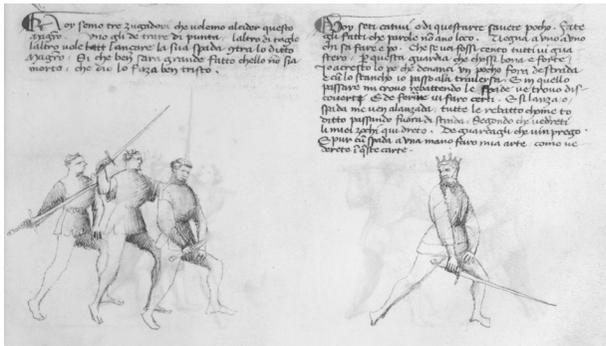
GUY WINDSOR

not think that the sword itself is any different to the longsword used elsewhere; this is not a separate weapon, it's a distinct *use* of a weapon. I will reserve commenting on the section as a whole for when I have completed the transcription and translation. You can find it towards the end of this book.

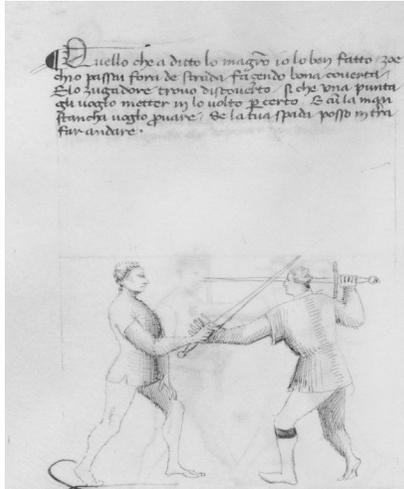
THE FIRST TWO PLAYS



This is where the rubber meets the road: the first sword on sword action of the book! Personally I love the dagger stuff too, but pretty much everyone comes to class for the SWORDS!



Recall the situation: the Master (that's you) is about to be attacked with a cut, a thrust, or a thrown sword. In this illustration it's pretty clear that the player (no garter) is attacking the master's scholar (with garter), with a cut to the head. Good start.



Quello che a detto lo magistro io lo ben fatto, zoe chio passar fora de strada facendo bona coverta. E lo zugadore trovo scoperto. Si che una punta gli voglio metter in lo volto per certo. E cum la man stanca voglio pigliare. E la tua spada posso in terra far andare.

That which the master said I have done well, thus, I have passed out of the way making a good cover. And I find the player uncovered. Such that if I want to I can place a point in his face for certain. And with my left hand I want to grab. And I can make your sword go to the ground.

Notice that opponent starts out as “the player” (*lo zugadore*) and then becomes ‘you’ (as in *la tua spada*, your sword), as if the scholar was speaking to him. This sort of inconsistency is not important for reconstructing the techniques, but should be noted, because it tells us something about the level of care taken with the text. Also, as I wrote in *The Art of Sword Fighting in Earnest*, page 32: “I should also note that it is normal Italian usage to write ‘the arm’, ‘the sword’, where in English we would use ‘your arm’, or ‘his sword’. Where it is clear from the context whose body part or weapon is being referred to, I say so.

Readers should note that, strictly speaking, this is interpretation.”

Given the starting point, with the master’s sword chambered to his left, and the player cutting from his right, and the way all the plays continue, the blades *must* at this point be arranged such that the master’s is closer to us in the picture. Have a look at the crossing in close-up: you can see that the lines don’t quite work.



Now look at the feet. The player has his *left* foot forwards, which is odd given that he is striking from his right. It may suggest that the attack was done with an *accrescere forwards*, not a pass.

Hold that thought while we look at the next play.

In tutto tu trovando scoperto, e in la testa to ferido per certo. E se io cum lo mio pe di dredo voglio inanci passare, Assay zoghi stretti poria contra te fare, zoe in ligadure, rotture, e abbrazare.

Finding you completely uncovered, I struck you in the head for sure. And if I, with my back foot pass forwards, I can do some close plays against you, such as binds, breaks, and wrestling.

Notice that the scholar doing the play has his right foot forwards. The question is, what about the pass mentioned in the master’s text? Has the player already done two passes, and is about to do at third? Clearly not, as that would be absurd in practice. So, can we omit the pass, and do the parry and strike without one?

Let’s have a look at the Pisani-Dossi, carta 13A:

*Cum passo o fata coverta cum mia spada
E quella in lo peto subito te intrada.*

With [a] pass I have made [a] cover with my sword
And that has immediately entered your chest.

This play on the next page (carta 14a) looks very much like the second play in the Getty above. The text reads:

*Anchora la testa to ferida senza passare
Per la bona coverta ch'io sapuda fare.*

Again I have struck the head, without passing,
With the good cover that I knew how to do.

So it would seem that we have textual authority to interpret the Getty play as making the cover with just the *accrescere*, and then striking immediately, no pass required. This makes abundant practical sense anyway, but it's nice to have the confirmation from the Pisani-Dossi.

These two plays may be summarised as 'parry, pass in, and grab', and 'parry and strike without passing'. This begs the question of when and why to do which?

Many years ago, one of my senior students, Topi Mikkola, was doing the second play with a much less experienced person. Despite Topi being co-operative and helpful, his internal structure was just too stable for the beginner to be able to move the sword out of the way for the second play to work- there was no opening. So I told him to enter with the first play... and boom! It made sense in my head.

When you are attacked, parry. You can't predict exactly what will happen when you do, but so long as you're not hit (ie the parry worked), then either:

A) the line to the head is not open for your cut, so do the first play (this is the most likely outcome), or

B) the line is open, so strike with the second play.

Here are links to video clips of how I do these actions:

The sword in one hand parry

<https://guywindsor.net/blog/siohparry>

The sword in one hand first play

<https://guywindsor.net/blog/sioh01>

The sword in one hand second play

<https://guywindsor.net/blog/sioh02>

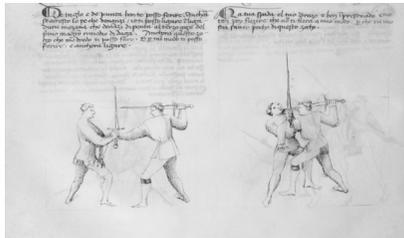
These videos are excerpted from my Medieval Longsword Complete Course, which you should totally go and buy. Here's a 50% discount link.

<https://guywindsor.net/blog/longswordcourseFTP>

THE THIRD AND FOURTH PLAYS



Folio 20v, plays 3 and 4.



These plays are relatively straightforward, after the master's cover, which has not blown the player's sword far enough aside that you can just cut the head as in the second play, you enter, into either of these two situations. I'll address why you would end up in one or the other after we've looked at the text.

De taglo e de punta ben te posso ferire. Anchora se acresco lo pe ch'è denanzi io ti posso ligare in ligadura mezana ch'è denanzi dipenta al terzo zogo del primo magistro rimedio di daga. Anchora questo zogo ch'è me dredo ti posso fare. E per tal modo ti posso ferire, e anchora ligare.

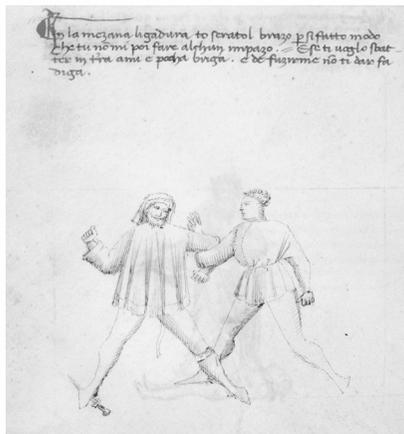
I can strike you well with cuts and thrusts. Also if I advance the foot that is in front I can bind you in the middle lock, that is shown at the third play of the first remedy master of the dagger. Also I can do this play that is after me. And in this way I can strike, and also bind.

Anchora is a popular word, isn't it? It literally means "again", but is often used as "um", "er", "so", "also" etc. *Ligare*, and it's noun form *ligadura* are also common, and bear some expansion. You may recall from Royal Armouries Ms I.33 the expression in Latin "*ligans ligati contrari sunt et irati: fugit at partes laterum, peto sequi*", "The binder and the bound are contrary and irate: he flees to the side, I seek to follow". In this case, *ligans/ligati* denotes binding sword to sword, but it survives into Italian as to bind, to tie, etc. (In modern Italian, *legare*). It's important to note that throughout the book Fiore *only* uses it to describe grappling of one sort or another, never binds between blades.

Because we tend to call these grappling techniques where you hold the person still in order to hit them 'locks', I have translated *ligadura mezana* as the middle lock. It's interesting to note that the *ligadura sottana*, the lower lock, is also called the 'strong key', the *chiave forte*. Key implies lock, of course.

While we're here, let's look at those two dagger plays:

The third play of the first master of the dagger, from f10v:



In la mezana ligadura t'ò serato 'l brazo, per si fatto modo che tu non mi poi fare alchun impazo. E se ti voglo sbatter in terra a mi e pocha briga. E de fuzirme non ti daro fadiga.

I have locked your arm in the middle lock, in such a way that you can't be of any inconvenience. And if I want to smash you to the ground, that's no trouble. And don't bother escaping from me.

Notice that Fiore uses 'serare', 'to lock', not 'ligare', 'to bind', in the first sentence, further justification for translating *ligadura* as lock. And the text where *ligadura sottana* is equated with *chiave forte* is on 14r, third illustration (this is the 6th play of the third master):



Questa e chiamada ligadura di sotto e la chiave forte. Che cum tal ligadura armado e disarmado se po dar la morte, che in tutti loghi piculosi po ferire, E di si fatta ligadura no po essere e chi gli entra gli sta cum briga a cum stenta/sienta/fienta secondo che si vedi ne la figura dipenta.

This is called the low lock and the strong key. With this lock one can give death, armoured or unarmoured, because one can strike in all the dangerous places. And the one to whom the lock is done cannot

escape, and whoever enters it will be in trouble and in pain, as you see in the depicted figure.

Here's how I do the play:

The third play

<https://guywindsor.net/blog/sioh03>

The fourth play of the sword in one hand is the lock that one could also do (as stated in the text of the third play). The text reads:

La tua spada el tuo brazo e ben impresonado e no ten poy fuzare che non ti fiera a mio modo, per che tu mostra saver pocho di questo zogho.

Your sword is well imprisoned and you cannot escape without being struck in the way that I do (lit. my way), because you show that you know little of this play.

This is how I do it:

The fourth play

<https://guywindsor.net/blog/sioh04>

The primary difference I see between the first and the third play is the player's feet; in the third play he appears to have passed back, as he is now right foot forwards. This suggests that the scholar is chasing him. In the fourth play, the player is still left foot forwards, and the scholar appears to have extended himself forwards.

The first, third, and fourth plays, taken together, suggest that the scholar does one thing: parry, and not seeing an opening to strike, enters in with his left hand. He may grip the player's sword hilt, wrist, or envelop the elbow, depending on the measure, which is a factor of the player's movement, and the scholar's intentions.

THE FIFTH PLAY



*W*e find the fifth play on f21r:



*Qui te posso ben ferire, e la tua spada tore senza fallire, voltandola in torno la mane ti faro **riversare** per modo che la spada te convien lassare.*

Here I can strike you well, and take your sword without fail, turning it around your hand I'll make you twist in such a way that you'd prefer to let go of the sword.

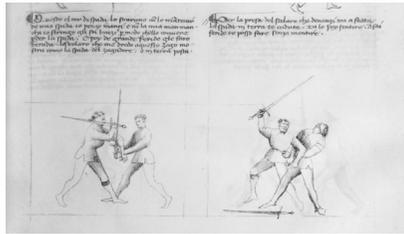
The execution of this play is perfectly clear and straightforward. You can see how I do it here:

The fifth play

<https://guywindsor.net/blog/sioh05>

It depends on the player's arm being sufficiently extended that you can reasonably grab the hilt, as shown in the image. I do the turn to my right, only (just as I do the other *tor di spada* plays, on f30r and f30v). Seeing as I've mentioned them, here they are:

F30r: the Soprano Tor di Spada, 19th and 20th plays of the master of the zogho stretto:



Questo el tor di spada lo soprano cum lo mantener de mia spada io penzo inanzi e cum la mia man manca io stringo gli doi brazi per modo chello convene perder la spada. E poy de grande feride gle faro derada. Lo Scolaro che me dredo a questo zogo mostra como la spada del zugadore e in terra poste.

This, the upper taking of the sword [disarm], with the handle of my sword I push forwards and with my left hand I constrain his two arms in a way that makes him lose the sword. And then I mess him up with great blows. The scholar that is after me shows this play, how the sword of the player is put on the ground.

Per la presa del scolaro che denanzi mi a fatta la spada in terra te caduta, tu lo poy sentire. Asai feride te posso fare senza mentire.

By the grip of the scholar before me I have made your sword fall to the ground, you can feel it. So I can strike you, without lying.

Let me rephrase that last sentence: I can smack you up, no lie. Or I'm not lying when I say...

As you can see, I prefer to give you the more literal translation, as a number of readers are using the transcription and translation to teach themselves Italian (or at least, teaching themselves to read Fiore). By sticking as closely to his sentence structure and grammar as is consistent with making sense, I'm helping those future scholars of the art. This may not suit everyone, but tough.

Turning the page to f30v, we see three more disarms. These are the middle (gripping the sword handle), the lower (gripping the pommel), and a last un-named variant, where you drop your sword and grab the blade.

21st play:



Questo el mezano tor de spada chi lo sa fare. Tal voltar di spada si fa in questo qual al primo. Salvo che le prese non sono eguale.

This the middle disarm that I know how to do. The turn of the sword is done in this [play] as in the first. Except that the grips are not the same.

22nd play:



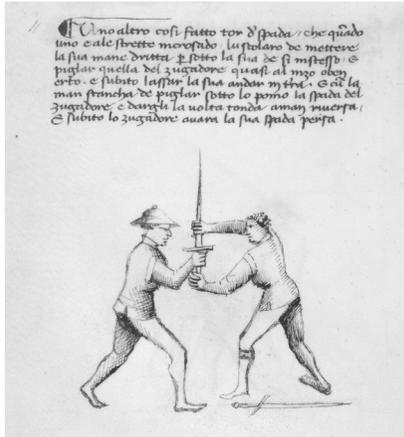
Questo e un altro tor de spada chiamato sottano. Per tal simile modo se tole questa como fa lo sottano el soprano, zoe cum tale voltar de spada per lo camino de le altre questa vada. Cum la mane dritta cargando inanci una volta fada cum lo mantener. E la mane stanca la volta tonda debia seguir.

This is another disarm, called 'low'. By that similar way this is done as is done the low, the high, thus with that turn of the sword in the path that the other is done, this goes. I make a turn with the handle with the right hand pressing forwards. And the left hand must follow the round turn.

The meaning is clear, but the language is clunky (sorry maestro). In essence: do this the same way that you did the high disarm, following the same path. (I translated 'camino' as 'path', though way would also work, because elsewhere I translate 'modo' as 'way'. This 'camino' is explicitly a way as in a pathway, not a way as in a general

style.) As you make the turn with the right hand pressing forwards, make sure your left hand follows the same turn.

23rd play:



*Uno altro così fatto tor d'spada che quando uno e ale strette incrosado, lu scolaro de mettere la sua mane dritta per sotto la sua **de si instesso** E piglar quella del zugadore quasi al mezo o ben erto. E subito lassur la sua andar in terra. E cum la man stancha de piglar sotto lo pomo la spada del zugadore e dargli la volta tonda a man riversa, e subito lo zugadore avara la sua spada persa.*

Another disarm is done like this, when one is crossed at the close, the scholar puts his right hand under his [sword].... And grab that of the player about at the middle, or well up [the blade]. And immediately let his [sword] go to the ground. And with his left hand he grabs the player's sword under the pommel and gives it a round turn to the left-hand side, and immediately the player will have lost his sword.

Returning to the sword in one hand, you can see that the mechanics of the disarm are the same in the fifth play; you turn their sword clockwise with your left hand at the hilt. As they are

holding on with only one hand, you should be able to do the disarm using only your hand, but I usually use the blade of my sword (instead of the handle or your hand) to push their blade round too, and pass behind myself as I do it, just as in the stretto plays disarms.

The disarms can be tricky for students, especially those which use the handle of your sword to apply pressure. I usually teach the 23rd stretto play version first, starting from an artificial static crossing, then work backwards, through the low, middle and high disarm. This way the mechanics are clear.

Here's an extract from the Longsword Course, showing that in practice:

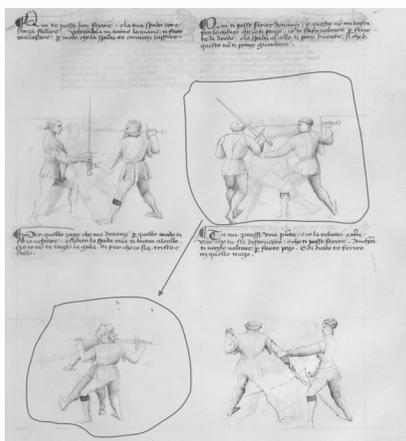
Video on how to do the disarms

Yes, you should definitely sign up for the course. Here's a discount code for you...

THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH PLAYS



The seventh play completes the sixth, which is simplicity itself: push the elbow. The text reads:



Qui ti posso ferire denanci. E questo non mi basta, per lo cubito che io ti penso, io ti faro voltare per ferirte di dredo, e la spada al collo ti poro butare, si che di questo non ti poray guardare.

Here I can strike you in front. And this does not satisfy me; by the

push that I have given to your elbow, I will make you turn to strike you from behind, and I can throw my sword to your neck, and you won't be able to defend against it.

By controlling the elbow, you can prevent them from parrying your strike. By pushing it, you can turn them to strike from behind. The seventh play shows this continuation. The text reads:

Per quello zogo che me denanzi per quello modo ti faro voltare e subito la spada mia ti butar al collo. Se io non te taglo la gola di pur che io sia tristo e follo.

By this play that is before me, in this way I make you turn and immediately throw my sword to your neck. If I don't cut your throat, I would be a sad fool.

This is how I do them:

The sixth and seventh plays.

<https://guywindsor.net/blog/sioh0607>

THE EIGHTH AND NINTH PLAYS



The eighth play is interesting; it's basically a breaking of the thrust (which I'll detour into in a moment).



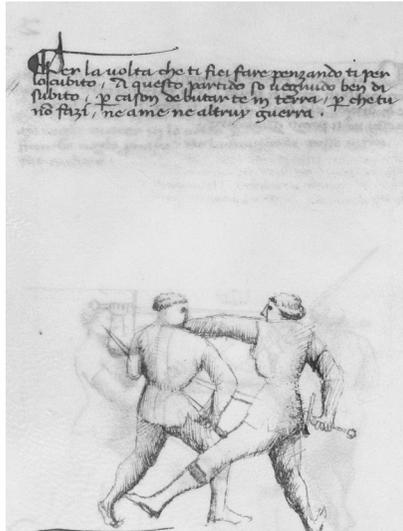
The text reads:

Tu mi zitassi una punta e io la rebati a terra. Vede che tu sei scoperto e che ti posso ferire. Anchora ti voglio voltare per farte pezo. E di dredo te feriro in quello mezo.

You threw a thrust at me and I beat it to the ground. You see that you are uncovered and I can strike you. Also I want to turn you by pushing you. And I will strike you from behind in the middle of that [turn].

We turn the page to the ninth play to find the results of the elbow pushed mentioned in the eighth play:

F21v



Per la volta che ti fici fare pensando ti per lo cubito, a questo partito so' vegnudo ben di subito, per cason ti butar te in terra, per che tu non fazi, ne a me ne altruy guerra.

By the turn that I have made you you, pushing your elbow, I have come to this play immediately, for the purposes of throwing you to the ground, so you will not make war with me or anyone else.

Here is how I do them:

The eighth and ninth plays.

<https://guywindsor.net/blog/sioh0809>

Notice that the parry is different- you must keep your hand low and whip the blade over theirs, middle to middle and drive it to the ground. How do I know that? Well, practice, but also this, the eleventh play of the master of the zogho largo crossed at the middle of the swords, shown on f26v:



The text reads:

Questa sie un'altra deffesa che se fa contra la punta, zoe, quando uno ti tra una punta come to detto in lo scambiar de punta in lo secondo zogo che me denanzi che se de acresser e passar fora di strada. Chossi si die far in questo zogho salvo che lo scambiar de punta se va cuz punta e cum gli brazzi bassi, e cum la punta erta de la spada come ditto denanzi. Ma questa se chiama romper de punta che lo scolaro va cum gli brazzi erti e pigla lo fendente cum lo acresser e passare fora de strada e tra per traverso la punta quasi a meza spada a rebater la a terra. E subito vene ale strette.

This is another defence that is done against the thrust, so, when one thrusts at you as I said in the exchange of thrust, in the second play

that is before me, one advances and passes out of the way. So you must do in this play except that in the exchange of thrust you go with the thrust, and with the arms low, and with the point of the sword high, as I said before. But this is called the breaking of the thrust, that the scholar goes with his arms high and grabs the fendente with the advance and pass out of the way, and strikes across the thrust about at the middle of the sword to beat it to the ground. And immediately goes to the close plays.

The action is completed in the next play, the 12th:



Lo scolaro che me denanzi a rebatuda la spada del zugador a terra, e io complisto lo suo zogho per questo modo. Che rebattuda la sua spada a terra, io gli metto cum forza lo mio pe dritto sopra la sua spada. Overo che io la rompo o la piglo per modo che piu non la pora curare. E quisto no me basta, che subito quando glo posto lo pe sopra la spada, io lo fiero cum lo falso dela mia spada sotto la barba in lo collo. E subito torno cum lo fendente de la mia spada per gli brazzi o per le man come depento.

The scholar that is before me has beaten the sword of the player to the ground, and I have completed his play in this way. Having beaten the sword to the ground, I place my right foot with force over his sword. Either I break it or I grab it in a way that prevents him from recovering from it. And this is not enough for me, so immediately that I have put my foot over his sword, I strike him with the false [edge] of my sword under the beard in the throat. And immediately return with the fendente with my sword to the arms or the hand as is pictured.

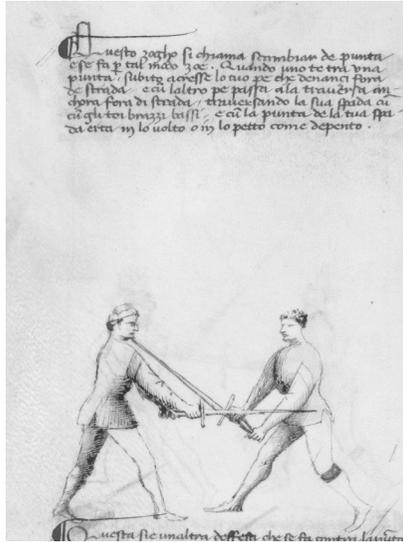
Isn't that wonderfully specific? The false edge in the throat under the beard. This action, a roverso mezano, naturally leads into a fendente, which you can do to the head (as Fiore shows later), or to the arms or hand, as you see...

Here's how I do that:

Breaking the thrust

<https://guywindsor.net/blog/lszl011012>

This is pretty straightforward. The next three plays are continuations from here, but I'll leave them for when I translate that section, as they are not needed for understanding the eighth play of the sword in one hand. But, it does look like I'll have to cover the ninth play of the second master of the zogho largo here, as Fiore mentions it in the text... ok, here goes:



Questo zogho si chiama scambiar de punta e se fa per tal modo zoe. Quando uno te tra una punta subito acresse lo tuo pe ch'è denanci fora de strada e cum l'altro pe passa ala traversa anchora fora di strada traversando la sua spada cum cum gli toi brazzi bassi e cum la punta de la tua spada erta in lo uolto o in lo petto com'è depento.

This play is called the exchange of thrust, and it is done like this, thus. When one strikes a thrust at you immediately advance your foot that is in front out of the way and with the other foot pass also out of the way, crossing his sword with with your arms low and with the point of your sword up in the face or in the chest as is pictured.

Note the repeated 'cum', 'with'. This is a common scribal error. Not secret messages from beyond the grave, ok? The instructions couldn't be clearer, could they? I do this play like so:

The Exchange of Thrusts

<https://guywindsor.net/blog/lslz1009>

I'm often asked about the difference between German and

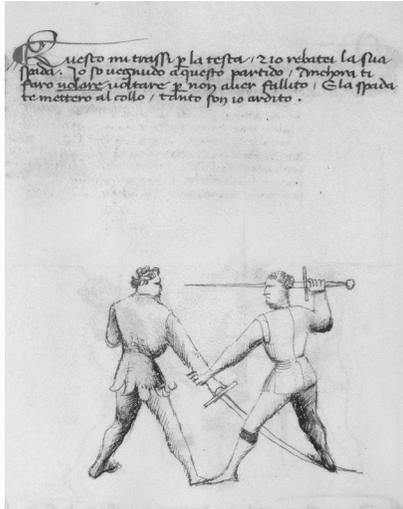
GUY WINDSOR

Italian medieval longsword sources. Here's the big one, as far as I can see: Fiore tells us exactly what to do, and organises everything into a consistent and coherent system. The German writers... don't.

THE TENTH PLAY



F 21v continues with the tenth play of the sword in one hand, like so:



Questo mi trassi per la testa e io rebater la sua spada. Io so vegnudo a questo partido. Anchora ti faro volare voltare per non aver fallito. E la spada te metterò al collo, tanto son io ardito.

[The underlined *volare* is in the text; it should be crossed out, but I've reproduced it as-is, and translated it too!]

This one attacked my head, and I beat his sword. I have come to this technique. Again I want to make you fly turn, to not fail. And I'll put my sword to your neck, so bold am I.

It's nice to see one of the four virtues (in this case *ardimento*) mentioned in the text. Here's a blog post on developing that virtue, should you need it.

The play is quite simple: as the blow comes in, you beat it away and down, and enter in, pushing the elbow, and turning them to cut their throat. Here it is:

The tenth play.

<https://guywindsor.net/blog/sioh010>

"Peasant's blow?" I hear you cry? Why yes, it reminds me strongly of that. Because the only way that player's sword is going to end up on the ground is if they fall asleep mid-attack (which is unlikely), or they are striking overly hard. Like a peasant.

This is the fifth and sixth play of the master of the *zogho largo* crossed at the middle of the swords, on f26r.



Questo zogho sie chiamato colpo di villano, e sta in tal modo, zoe, che si de aspettare lo villano che lo traga cum sua spada, e quello che lo colpo aspetta de stare in piccolo passo cum lo pe stancho denanzi. E subito che lo villano ti tra per ferire acesse lo pe stancho fora de strada inverso la parte dritta. E

cum lo dritto passa ala traversa fora di strada piglando lo suo colpo a meza la tua spada. E lassa discorrer la sua spada a terra e subito risponde gli cum lo fendente per la testa o vero per gli brazzi, overo cum la punta in lo petto come depento. Anchora e questo zogho bon cum la spada contra la azza, e ntra un bastone grave o liziero.

This play is called the peasant's blow, and it's like this, thus: one awaits the peasant to attack one with his sword, and the one who waits should be in a narrow stance [piccolo passo: lit. Small pace, I.e. With the feet not too far apart] with the left foot forwards. And immediately that the peasant comes to strike, advance the left foot out of the way towards the right side [of the peasant]. And with the right pass across out of the way, grabbing his blow in the middle of your sword. And let it run off to the ground and immediately reply with the fendente to the head, or to the arms, or with the thrust in the chest as is pictured. Also this play is good with the sword against the axe, and against a staff, heavy or light.

Qui denanzi sie lo colpo del villano che ben glo posta la punta in lo petto. E cossi gli posseva un colpo per la testa fare e per gli brazzi cum lo fendente com'e ditto denanzi. Anchora s'el zogadore volesse 'ntra de mi fare volendo mi ferire cum lo reverso sotto gli miei brazzi io subito acresso lo pe stancho e metto la mia spada sopra la sua. E non mi po far niente.

Here before is the peasant's blow, that can well put the thrust in the chest. And thus one could do a strike to the head and to the arms with the fendente as is said above. Also, if the player might want to act against me wishing to strike me with the reverso under my arms, I immediately advance the left foot and put my sword over his. And he can do nothing to me.

I do it like so:

The colpo di villano

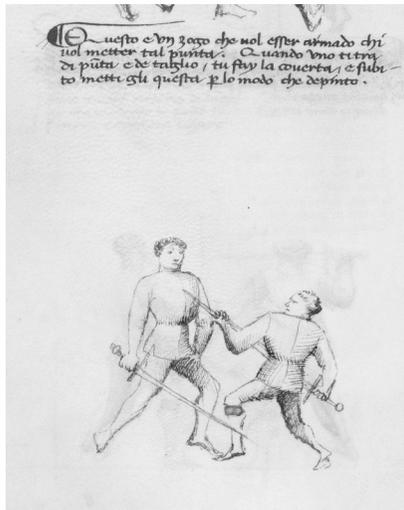
<https://guywindsor.net/blog/lsl0506>

It's worth noting that Fiore (or his scribe) spells colpo di villano in two different ways here: di, or del. It's not important to the meaning, it's just important to remember that standardised spelling was many years in the future, so don't sweat it.

THE ELEVENTH PLAY



This section concludes with the eleventh play, which on the face of it makes no sense:



Questo e un zogo che vol esser armado chi vol metter tal punta. Quando uno ti tra di punta o de taglio, tu fay la coverta e subito metti gli questa per lo modo che depinto.

This is a play that should be done in armour, and that places this thrust. When one comes at you with a thrust or a cut, you make the cover and immediately place this [thrust] in the way that is pictured.

And then we have two blokes just standing there. What on Earth is the player's sword doing down there, and what is the scholar up to?

My feeling is that this is no more than a general instruction: when in armour, thrust using half-sword. If we turn a couple of pages to 22v, we see this figure:

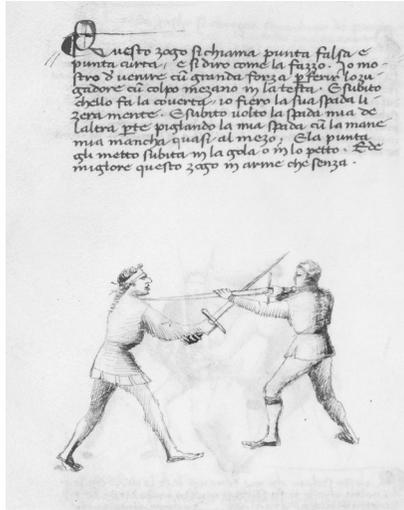


Io son bona guardia contra spada azza e daga siando armado, per che io tegno la spada cum la man manca al mezo. Ello faco per fare contra la daga che me po fare de le altre arme pezo.

I am a good guard against sword, axe, and dagger, being in armour, because I hold the sword with the left hand at the middle. I do it [i.e. hold the sword with the left hand at the middle] to act against the dagger, which can do worse [to me] than the other weapons.

It's clear then that the grip shown is the critical factor in armoured combat with the sword. Skipping ahead to the guards and

plays of the sword in armour, f32v-f35r, we see **only** half-sword grips on the part of Fiore's masters and scholars at the moment of the cover, which confirms the theory that half-swording is the critical instruction here. So I think that the 'technique' shown in the picture on 21v is a general admonition: 'in armour, do this' rather than a specific action. This doesn't mean that you should **only** do half-sword plays when you're in armour; it's more the other way round- you should really do half-swording when in armour- as Fiore writes on f27v, in the play of the punta falsa (which I'll go into at length when we go through the plays of the longsword in two hands) "this play is better in armour than without".



Back to the eleventh play of the sword in one hand: either begin in one of the armoured guards, or make the parry and shift to half-sword. You can see my basic iteration here:

The eleventh play.

<https://guywindsor.net/blog/sioh011>

THOUGHTS ON THE PARRY FROM THE LEFT



As I see it, the sword in one hand section is very clearly a short and simple version of the system, foreshadowing Viggiani's *Lo Schermo* (1575. Available in translation by Jherck Swanger. It's essential reading for any scholar of Italian swordsmanship of any period.). This parry from the left is so fundamental that Fiore concludes the plays of the longsword on foot out of armour with one:

F31r:



Questi sono tre compagni che voleno alcider questo magistro che aspetta cum la spada a doy mane. Lo primo di questi tre vole lanzare la sua spada contra lo magistro. Lo secondo vole ferire lo detto magistro d'taglio o de

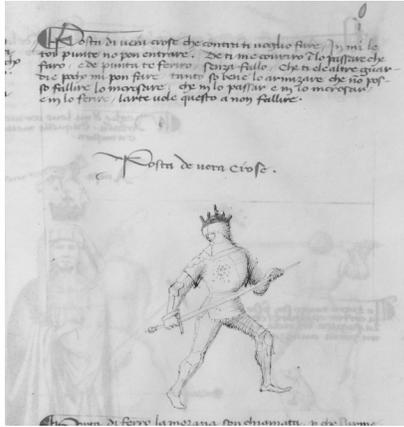
punta. Lo terzo vole lanzare doy lanze chello aparechiado com'e qui depento.

These are three companions who wish to kill this master, who waits with the sword in two hands. The first of these three wishes to throw his sword against the master. The second wishes to strike the said master with cut or thrust. The third wishes to throw two lances that he has ready, as is pictured here.

Io spetto questi tre in tal posta, zoe, in dente di zengiaro, o in altre guardie poria spettare zoe in posta de donna la senestra, anchora in posta di finestra sinistra cum quello modo e deffesa che faro in dente di zenghiaro. Tal modo e tal deffesa le ditte guardie debian fare. Senza paura io spetto uno a uno e non posso fallire. Ne taglio ne punta ne arma manuale che mi sia lanzada. Lo pe dritto chi'o denanzi acresco fora de strada, e cum lo pe stancho passo ala traversa del arma che me incontra rebatendola in parte riversa. E per questo modo fazo mia deffesa. Fatta la coverta subito faro l'offesa.

I await these three in this guard, thus, in dente di zengiaro [boar's tooth], or in other guards I could wait, thus in posta di donna la senestra [the woman's guard on the left], also in posta di finestra sinistra [the window guard on the left], with this way and defence that I do in dente di zenghiaro. This way and this defence the said guards must do. Without fear I await [them] one by one, and I cannot fail. Neither cut nor thrust nor hand weapon that is thrown at me. The right foot that is in front I advance out of the way, and with the left foot I pass across the weapon that I encounter, beating it to the roverso side [of the opponent]. And in this way I make my defence. Making the cover I immediately make the offence.

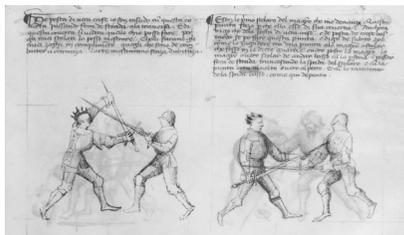
And in armour: the technical instruction for the first play, another parry from the left, tells us to start in *vera croce*, the true cross, so I'll begin with that from f32v:



Posta di vera crosse che contra ti voglio fare. In mi le toi punte no pon entrare. De ti me coveiro in lo passare che faro. E de punta te feriro, senza fallo. Che ti e le altre guardie pocho mi pon fare tanto so bene lo armizare che non posso fallire lo incrosare, che in lo passar e in lo incrosar e in lo ferire l'arte vole questo a non fallire.

I want to make the guard of the true cross against you. [The guard is speaking to the guard opposite, *posta breve la serpentina*. I'll cover that when I get to translating the whole of this section.] Your thrusts cannot enter against me. I will cover [your actions] in the pass that I will make. And I will strike you with a thrust without fail. You and the other guards can do little against me, my art of arms is so good that I cannot fail in the crossing. In the pass, and in the crossing, and in the strike I wish [to do], this will not fail.

The play looks like this:



De posta di vera crose io son ensudo cum questa coverta passando fora de strada ala traversa. E di questa coverta si vedera quello ch'io posso fare per gli miei scolari lo posso mostrare. Chelli farano gli miei zoghi in complimento, quegli che sono de combatter a oltranza l'arte mostrarano senza dubitanza.

I have come from the vera croce guard with this cover, passing across out of the way. And with this cover you will see what I can do, I will show you through my scholars. They will do the completion of my plays. Those that are fighting 'a oltranza' [in earnest; to the bitter end; to the death] will show the art without doubt.

The play continues:

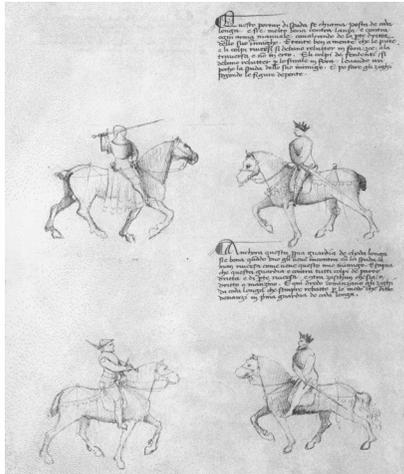
E son lo primo scolaro del magistro che me denanzi. Questa punta fazo per che ella esse di sua coverta. Anchora digo che dela posta di vera crose e de posta de crose bastarda se po fare questa punta, e digo de subito zoe comme lo zugadore tra una punta alo magistro o scolar che fosse in le ditte guardie overo poste lo magistro o scolar lo magistro overo scolar de andar basso cum la persona e passar fora de strada traversando la spada del scolaro, e cum la punta erta al volto overo al petto e cum lo mantenir de la spada basso come qui depento.

And I am the first scholar of the master that is before me. I make this thrust because it comes from his cover. Also I say that the true cross guard and the bastard cross guard can do this thrust, and I say immediately. So, when the player comes with a thrust to the master or scholar who was in the said guards [poste] or guards [guardie], the master or scholar, the master or scholar, goes low with their body and passes out of the way across the scholar's sword, and with the point up to the face or to the chest, and with the handle of the sword low as is pictured here.

Note the accidental repetition of 'master or scholar', and

crossing the *scholar's* sword, where it should obviously be the *player's*. Don't exaggerate the 'going low with the body'; you're in armour after all. I think this is mentioned because students have a tendency to rise up with the parry, which is a mechanical error.

Don't let me get too far off topic. We're still focussing on the plays of the sword in one hand. But there are more parries from the left. **Every** parry done with the sword in the mounted combat section is done from the left. Starting with the plays of the sword against sword (so skipping all the lance stuff, which also has, you guessed it, parries from the left), we have these two masters on 43v:



Questo portar di spada se chiama posta de coda longa e sie molto bona contra lanza e contra ogni arma manuale cavalcando de la parte dritta dello suo inimigo. E tente ben a mente che le pu[n]te e li colpi riversi si debano rebatter in fora, zoe , ala traversa e non in erto. Eli colpi de fendenti si debano rebatter per lo simile in fora levando un pocho la spada dello suo inimigo. E po fare gli zoghi secondo le figure depente.

This way of carrying the sword is called the guard of the long tail, and it is very good against lance, or against all hand weapons, riding on the right hand side of your enemy. And keep well in mind tha the thrusts and the backhand blows you must beat away, thus, across

and not up. And the fendente blows must similarly be beaten away, lifting your enemy's sword a little. And you can make the plays according to the drawn figures.

Anchora questa propria guardia de choda longa sie bona quando uno gli vene incontra cum la spada a man riversa come vene questo mio inimigo. E sapia che questa guardia e contra tutti colpi de parte dritta e di parte riversa e contra zaschun che sia o dritto o manzino. E qui dredo cominzano gli zoghi di coda longa che sempre rebatte per lo modo che ditto denanzi in prima guardia de coda longa.

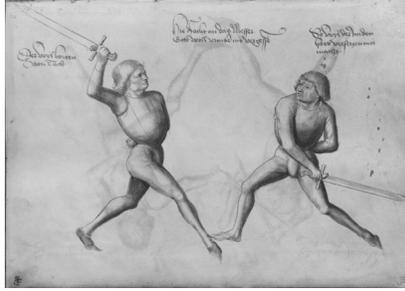
Also this same guard of the long tail is good when one comes against you with the sword on the backhand side as this enemy of mine comes. And know that this guard is against all blows from the forehand side, and from the backhand side, and against anyone who is right-handed or left-handed. [YES! Fiore does mention left-handers explicitly. *Manzino*, left-hander]. And below follow the plays of coda longa that always beats in the way that is said above, in the first guard of coda longa.

The mechanics are similar, though of course you can't step across in the same way- that's the horse's job!

You can also find covers from the left in the second, third, and seventh masters of the dagger (ff 13r, 13v, 17r), the guard of porta di ferro mezana with the pollax (f35v), and the dente di zenghiaro guards on 24r and 24v. You can surely find even more if you look... oh yes, there's one with the spear too (40r).

We also see this action in *every* messer treatise I've come across.

Here it is in Talhoffer (translation by Cory Winslow, on Wiktenauer)

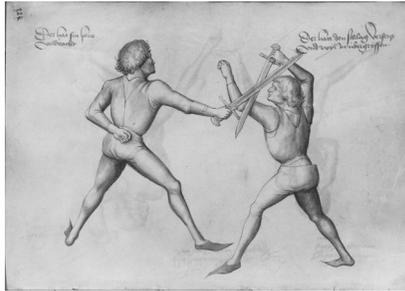


Here begins the Messer.

God please do not forget us.

He will hew from the roof.

So he will he displace the hew with might.



He has his hew completed.

He has displaced the blow and will over-grip him.



Here has he over-gripped him and hewed him through the head and the before described piece has an end.

Look familiar?

Two hundred years later, even Capoferro gets in on the act with his “secure way to defend yourself against all sorts of blows”, at the end of *Gran Simulacro*.

SECURE WAY OF DEFENDING ONESELF FROM EVERY SORTÂ OF BLOW WITH A PARRY OF A RIVERSO AND STRIKING ALWAYS WITH AN IMBROCCATA

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 guards of prima and quarta, discovering in prima the offense, and in quarta the defence, the beginning and end of whatsoever honoured scheme; considering that quarta defends against any blow, resolute or irresolute, and prima 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 prima begins from high and finishes in a somewhat low quarta, and this is for two reasons. First, because 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, one can strike with an imbroccata in the chest, and by such an end, one returns into the guard of quarta. Second, because the adversary cannot offend if not to the right side, which can easily be defended with an ascendente from the said quarta, 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 guards of prima and quarta.

THE END

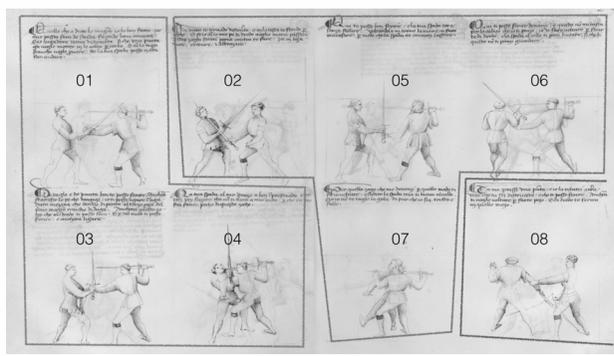
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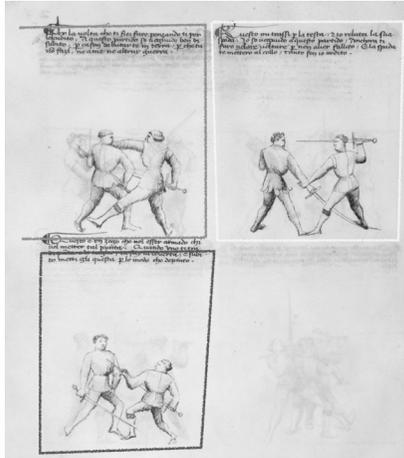
(Translation by William Wilson and Jherek Swanger. Shouty CAPS are in the original.)

This parry from the left is one of the foundations of swordsmanship, culminating even in Angelo's parry of carte over the arm.

We should not be surprised then to find that this parry from the left is so prevalent in Fiore's manuscripts; it's prevalent everywhere!

THOUGHTS ON THE SWORD IN ONE HAND SECTION





From *Advanced Longsword, Form and Function*, pp 84-86.
This would be the perfect place to go through the eleven plays of the sword in one hand, so let me summarise them for you below.

You parry a cut. It either beats the sword wide or it doesn't. From there, your opponent is either still, moving away or moving in. That gives you the first seven plays; then you have the defence against the thrust, then the defence against an over-committed blow, and finally dealing with an opponent in armour. It looks like this:

l'asena, li che male si po l'omo armare Et per paura de soy amisi voglio retornare.

This cad escaped from me to a castle. I rode so hard that I caught him close to the castle, always running at full rein. And with my sword I struck him under the armpit, where it is hard to protect a man with armour. And for fear of his friends I want to return.

Note, this is the *last play in the book*. This 'ribald', 'cad', or 'scoundrel' is running away. Riding hard, I catch him. Riding at 'full rein'- we have that expression in English still- to give free rein, or full rein, to something is to let the reins go slack, so the horse is not curbed in any way. Give it your all. Stab him in the armpit (*l'asela*, modern Italian, *l'ascella*), because it's hard to armour. Then run away from his friends. Who are in the castle. Doing things. Things that you have seen counters to over the last 90-odd pages.

This is clearly not a technique or play as such. It's a vivid image of your memory palace, and the villains it contains. Place your abrazare on the ground floor, perhaps, in 20 rooms. Divide your second floor into nine chambers, each with a dagger master... and so on.

Memory training is a really useful skill, and I have a few book recommendations for you:

For academic discussion of medieval memorisation techniques: Carruthers, Mary J. 1990. *The Book of Memory*

For a classic book of memorisation techniques: Lorayne, Harry, and Jerry Lucas. 1974. *The Memory Book*

For a fun modern memoir of developing a world-class memory: Foer, Joshua. 2011. *Moon Walking with Einstein*

This series will continue with the next section, which covers footwork, the six ways of holding the sword, the seven blows, and the twelve guards. Do you think Fiore may have organised this material to make it easy to memorise?

FURTHER READING



If you've enjoyed this booklet you should definitely visit my blog at guywindsor.net/blog and please consider buying one or more of the following:

The Swordsman's Quick Guide Series, Book 1: The Seven Principles of Mastery This instalment covers the principles you can follow to attain mastery in any field. It lays the groundwork for everything. And it's free on all platforms!

The Swordsman's Quick Guide Series, Book 2: Choosing a Sword This instalment covers the principle types of European sword, with their specifications, and advice on choosing a supplier.

The Swordsman's Quick Guide, Book 3: Preparing for Freeplay This instalment covers how to get from set basic drills to freeplay, by increasing complexity in a consistent and constructive way.

The Swordsman's Quick Guide, Book 4: Ethics This instalment gives the reader the basic tools to establish for themselves the ethical dimension of martial arts training.

The Swordsman's Quick Guide, Book 5: How to Teach a Basic Class This instalment is intended for people just starting out as teachers, to give them the teaching knowledge and confidence to run a safe basic class.

The Swordsman's Quick Guide, Book 6: Fencing Theory This instalment covers what fencing theory is, how it works, and how you can use it effectively in your study of swordsmanship. This is also available in the free 70-page sample of *The Theory and Practice of Historical Martial Arts*.

The Swordsman's Quick Guide, Book 7: Breathing This instalment is a detailed examination of breathing training, drawing from many sources and including instruction in my basic breathing practices, with links to instructional video for each exercise.

The Theory and Practice of Historical Martial Arts This book includes all seven instalments of *The Swordsman's Quick Guide*, as well as extensive instruction on recreating historical martial arts from historical sources, how to train, how to teach, even how to get better sleep.

The Swordsman's Companion A training manual for medieval longsword. This was my first book, and it has become something of a classic in this field. As a training manual, it is largely replaced by *The Medieval Longsword*, but as a book about how and why to train, it is still relevant.

The Duellist's Companion A training manual for 17th century Italian rapier. This is still the standard work on the interpretation and practice of Capoferro's rapier system.

The Little Book of Push-ups The title says it all. It also includes advice on how to get from zero to one push-up, and general physical training.

The Armizare Vade Mecum Mnemonic verses for remembering Fiore's Art. This is a collection of verses, each one of which encapsulates one element of Fiore's art.

Veni Vadi Vici A transcription and translation of Filippo Vadi's *De Arte Gladiatoria Dimicandi*, with commentary and analysis. This is my first full-length translation, and was funded by a successful Indigogo campaign. This has now been replaced by a second edition, titled *The Art of Sword Fighting in Earnest*.

Mastering the Art of Arms, Book 1: The Medieval Dagger A training manual for Fiore's dagger material. This is a complete overview of

the dagger material in Fiore's art of arms, and includes instruction on how to fall, how to develop real skills, as well as covering all of the fundamental attacks with and defences against the dagger.

Mastering the Art of Arms, Book 2: The Medieval Longsword A training manual for Fiore's longsword material. If you want to learn how to train and fight with a longsword in an authentic medieval style, this book is for you. This book features an introduction by the excellent historical novelist, and medieval combatant, Christian Cameron.

Mastering the Art of Arms, Book 3: Advanced Longsword, Form and Function This covers using forms for skill development, and a lot of Fiore-specific training, building on the groundwork laid in *The Medieval Longsword*.

Swordfighting, for Writers, Game Designers, and Martial Artists This book is made up of about 50% posts from my blog, and 50% new material, and does exactly what it says in the title. It also features an introduction from the one and only Neal Stephenson, author of *Snow Crash*, *The Diamond Age*, and *The Baroque Cycle*, to name but a few.

The Art of Sword Fighting in Earnest An accurate translation of Filippo Vadi's *De Arte Gladiatoria Dimicandi*, with a detailed introduction, commentary from a practical swordsmanship perspective, and a full glossary. This book was examined as part of my PhD, so it's been academically vetted at the highest level.

If you already have them all, thank you for your generous support of my work, I hope it helps you accomplish your goals!

Finally, let me ask you now to review this book, for better or worse, wherever is convenient for you. If I've done something right I need to know to do it again; moreover, I need to know what could be improved. To paraphrase Vadi: "And if this little work of mine finds its way into the hands of anyone versed in the art, and appears to them to have anything redundant or wrong, may it please them to cut, take away or add to it as he pleases. Because in the end I place myself under their correction and judgement."

Thank you!

GUY WINDSOR

Guy Windsor

GLOSSARY OF ITALIAN TERMS



The table below includes words that are either unique to fencing manuscripts (Fiore or Vadi's), or have a specific technical meaning in a fencing context. There are still some areas of debate amongst scholars of these arts; where I am aware of such, I have mentioned so in the comments. The translations are not necessarily applicable to modern Italian or other historical sources. Students should also note that the terms are often spelled several different ways in the original sources. Those interested in the translation process should read my article "Half Full? Translating Mezza and Tutta in Il Fior di Battaglia" available free online from www.guywindsor.net/blog/resources

Note that I have taken this from my book *The Art of Sword Fighting in Earnest*, and therefore several entries are specific to Vadi. I've noted them where they occur.

Italian grammar is quite simple, but has some aspects that English speakers may find odd—not least that a single word may have different forms, and to make a word plural, we can't just throw an 's' on the end. In general, nouns are either masculine or feminine, and adjectives will have both masculine and feminine forms that

agree with the noun they describe. For example: *punta falsa*, false thrust. *Filo falso*, false edge.

In general:

- Nouns ending in -e when singular will end in -i when plural: *fendente*, *fendenti*.
- Nouns ending in -o when singular will end in -i when plural: *colpo*, *colpi*.
- Nouns ending in -a when singular will end in -e when plural: *ligadura*, *ligadure*.

While it is standard practice to place all adjectives in their masculine form first, in the list below I have placed each word in the form that is most commonly used in Fiore (e.g. *Longa*), and I have used the spellings that you will find in Fiore and/or Vadi's manuscripts, such as *zogho*, which would be *gioco* in modern Italian.

These terms are frequently combined: for example, *mandritto fendente* is a forehand descending blow.

Abrazare: To wrestle

Accrescere: To step forwards without passing.

Audatia: Boldness. One of Fiore's four virtues. *Ardimento* in the Pisani-Dossi.

Avvisamento: Foresight. One of Fiore's four virtues. *Prudentia* in the Pisani-Dossi.

Bicorno: Two-horned. A guard.

Breve, posta breve: Short; short guard.

Celeritas: Speed. One of Fiore's four virtues. *Presteza* in the Pisani-Dossi.

Cinghiare / cinghiaro: Wild boar. The name of a specific guard position.

Colpo/i: blow(s) or strike(s).

Corona: Crown. The name of a specific guard position.

Coverta: Cover, parry.

Destro/a: On the right.

Discreocere: To step back without passing.

Donna: Woman or lady. The name of a specific guard position.

Dritto, diritto, derito: Right, forehand or true. *Filo* or *taglio dritto* is the true edge.

Elzo: Hilt; crossguard.

Falcon: Falcon. The name of a specific guard position (in Vadi).

Falso: False edge, back edge.

Fendente: Descending blow. Often qualified by *mandritto* / *dritto* (forehand) or *roverso* (backhand).

Finestra: Window. The name of a specific guard position.

Fora / for di strada: Out of the way. Often used in connection with a footwork action: thus *passo fora di strada*; “pass out of the way.”

Fortitudo: Strength. One of Fiore’s four virtues. *Forteza* in the Pisani-Dossi.

Frontale: Frontal, a guard.

Giocco / giocho/ zogho stretto: Close, narrow or constrained play. For a complete discussion, see this blog post. <https://guywind-sor.net/blog/2018/06/freedom-to-strike-a-lengthy-discussion-of-largo-and-stretto/>

Giocco / giocho/ zogho largo: Wide play.

Giocco / giocho/ zogho: play. This is used to describe a single sequence (such as the first play of the sword) and, when qualified as *largo* or *stretto*, the tactical situation.

Incrosare / incroce: Crossing. Also parry.

Largo: Wide. Used in contrast to *stretto*. A state of play, or tactical situation, in which you are free to strike.

Lunga/Longa: Long.

Mandritto: Forehand. See *dritto/diritto*.

Mantener: Handle of the sword.

Meza spada / mezza spada: Half sword. A crossing made near the middle of both blades, and a grip of the sword, by handle and blade.

Mezana porta di ferro: Middle iron door. A guard position.

Mezano/i: Middle blows, horizontal blows.

Passare: To pass, as in stepping.

Passo: A pass, also the length of a passing step, also the space between your feet when standing.

Porta di ferro: Iron door. Can also be “middle” (*mezana*) or “whole” (*tutta*).

Posta / poste: Position or guard. Used more commonly than *guardia*.

Quatro dita: “Four fingers.” A unit of measurement, the width of four fingers.

Rebattere: To beat aside- to parry.

Remedio: Remedy; the defence against an attack.

Rendopiare / reddopiare: Redouble. To strike again. Note: in 16th century Bolognese sources, *ridoppio* is a rising blow with the true edge, from the left. This is not the case here.

Riverso / roverso: Backhand.

Romperre: To break, as in the breaking of the thrust.

Rota: “Turn” from *rotare*. A rising blow. Used by Vadi only.

Sagitaria: Archer Refers to specific guard positions, used differently by Fiore and Vadi.

Scambiare: To exchange, as in to exchange the thrust.

Sinestro: On the left.

Somesso: The width of a fist. A unit of measurement.

Sottano: A rising blow.

Stancho: Left (side or foot, usually). In modern Italian, “tired.”

Strada: Way. This is used in the sense of the direct line between the two combatants. Hence to step *fora di strada*, “out of the way,” is to step off the line.

Stramazzone: A whirling blow from the wrist.

Stretto / stretta / strette: Close, constrained, narrow. Used alone in plural form, “strette” means “the *zogho stretto* plays of the sword”

Taglio/e: Cut, and also cutting edge.

Traverso; ala traversa: Across, or diagonal. Usually used in

connection with a footwork action: *va for de strada per traverso passo*; “go out of the way with a pass across.”

Tondo: “Round”: A horizontal blow

Tornare: “To return”; to pass back.

Vera croce: True cross. A guard position (sword in armour).

Volta: Turn. Specifically *volta stabile* (stable turn: when with both feet fixed you can play on the same side in front and behind), *meza volta* (half turn: when with a pass forwards or backwards you can play on the other side), *tutta volta* (whole turn: when one foot remains fixed and the other turns around it).

Vista, visteggiare: Feint, to feint. (Fiore doesn’t use it).

Volante / volanti: “Flying,” a horizontal blow. This term is unique to Vadi.

Zenghiaro: Wild boar. A guard.

Zogho largo: Wide play. See *giocco largo*.

Zogho stretto: Close play. See *giocco stretto*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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swordsmanship treatises, figuring out the systems they represent, creating a syllabus from the treatises for his students to train with, and teaching the system to his students all over the world. Guy is the author of numerous classic books about the art of swordsmanship and has consulted on swordfighting game design and stage combat. He developed the card game, Audatia, based on Fiore dei Liberi's Art of Arms, his primary field of study. In 2018 Edinburgh University awarded him a PhD by Research Publications for his work recreating historical combat systems. When not studying medieval and renaissance swordsmanship or writing books Guy can be found in his shed woodworking or spending time with his family.

