
Tract or Instruction on Fencing

Girolamo Cavalcabo, Angelo Paternostraro, Jacques de Villamont (tr/ed.)

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Introduction

About the text

No copy of Cavalcabo's or Patenoster's original manuscripts survive today, and we must rely solely on de Villamont's translation of both in one volume from Italian into French. The volume was republished about a dozen times and even translated (again!) into German. The two manuscripts are collections of notes and are not laid out in any logical manner, as evidenced by the random flow of topics and the intrusion of Cavalcabo's glossary in the middle of paragraphs explaining basic principles. Nonetheless, the practitioner is repaid many times for over the effort spent in puzzling through the disjointed text.

Sieur Jacques de Villamont

Sieur Jacques de Villamont was famous in his day as a writer of travelogues. In his Voyages, he recounts tales of and meeting famous fencing masters teaching in Italy. It is likely from the popularity of this work that the impetus to translate and publish the manuscripts originated. Villamont may even have earned a position at court on the basis of it.

Girolamo Cavalcabo

Girolamo (Hyeronime) Cavalcabo was a Bolognese fencing master, although whether this means simply that he came from Bologna or taught what modern HEMA practitioners would call a Bolognese style is debatable. My interpretation, based on the fencing system described in the text, is that the first idea is correct and that second is definitely wrong. But, actual evidence for this is possibly illusory. We do know that he was engaged by King Henry IV of France to teach his sons, Louis XIII and Gaston, to fence. Indeed, we have pay records from the 1640s suggesting Cavalcabo's own son, Cesar, was still employed in this capacity.

Angelo Paternostraro

Patenoster is relatively obscure and is unknown outside the references to him teaching in Rome. Given that he is referred to in this text as "the late Patenoster," he presumably died before it was translated around 1595.

Tract or Instruction on Fencing, from the Excellent Fencer, Hyeronime Cavalcabo, Bolognese.

With a speech on fencing with the sword alone made by the late Patenostrier of Rome.

Translated from Italian into French by the Lord de Villamont, Knight of the Order of Jerusalem.

In PARIS. By Claude Montre'œil, and Jean Richer. 1595.

With Privilege.

To My Lord,

Monsignor the Count of Brissac, Marshall of France.

My lord,

I do not undertake to write down in art that which, in so many revolutions of the centuries, we held so covered up that no one has had the knowledge to base any judgement on it except through long exercise and practice. However, having given my best and most cheerful years to the exercises most required by my profession, I have borne the late M. Hyeronime such goodwill that there were few students of my time who were more indebted to him for his care than me. Who, in addition to the ordinary exercise, common with all gentlemen, communicated to me his most particular and secret intentions which would have great effect, to the great satisfaction of the Nobility, if death had not opposed them. Now having through a pious duty towards his intention, and by the affection that I have for the good of France, purposing to put his project into effect, I borrow the favour of your name, so renowned through all Christianity from a long series of persons to whom weapons owe their restoration, both for art and discipline. This treatise that I offer you, or to France through you, on the condition that one part will not, cannot, and must not be removed as with so many beautiful ordinances which have in their origin your prudence, courageous experiences, and good fortune in all endeavours. It is through you (Monseigneur) that I therefore hope to merit some goodwill and favour from those who wish to help themselves with the laborious efforts of the late M. Hyeronime, which can be renewed through you, if you are so willing, that with very humble and faithful intention, it is presented to you by the one that your virtues have obtained, to be in perpetuity.

Your most humble servant

De Villamont

Tract and Instruction for Fencing, from the Excellent Fencer, Hyeronime Cavalcabo, Bolognese.

The four main guards of the sword alone, and sword and dagger.

The *premiere* guard is when you hold your arm higher than your shoulder. The *seconde* will be when the hand is at the same height as the shoulder. The *tierce* is when the arm is a little advanced in front of the knee. The *quarte* is done by holding the sword and dagger on the left side.

Counter-guards to the above

The counter-guard of the aforementioned *premiere* will be made with the fourth guard. The counter-guard of the *seconde* will be made the same. The counter-guard of *tierce* will be made the same, passing outside the enemy sword. The counter-guard of the *quarte* guard will be made with *seconde*, or *tierce*, turning towards the side of the enemy's dagger. The counter-guard of the left foot will be made with *seconde* and *tierce*, always turning to the side of the enemy's dagger, holding your dagger next to the hilt of your sword.

Knowing what our body can do.

Our body is divided into two parts, one of which acts to offend, the other to defend itself. The right side will be used for offence, and the left for defence.

Warning which must be heeded when watching the sword, dagger and foot of the enemy.

If you see your enemy's foot narrowed, he will offend you. If it is wide, it will be for waiting.

Know what is the most perfect parry.

The most perfect parry is when you parry with the sword. The parry with the dagger will be to assist it from your sword. The parry with the sword is understood as from the middle of it to the guard. The parry with the dagger will be observed with the weak of the enemy's sword, when he strikes at you with his point.

Interpretation of some words which are in this book.

Passing:¹ means to always move oneself but without changing your intention, unless an opportunity does present itself.

¹*passagiant*

Turning:² strictly speaking, means going or turning towards the assigned part which you want to offend.

To pass:³ is understood as to lead or move from one place to another.

If we talk about giving a *seconde*, *tierce*, or *quarte*, that is to say a thrust.

Botte: means a thrust, or a touch.

Inganner:⁴ means to delude or deceive one's enemy,

Caver: is as much to say as pretending to want to strike high and carrying it low or to pretend to strike low and carrying it high, or to strike above weapons.

Pied ferme: means giving an extended thrust without passing.

Chiamate: means removing a part of the body to incite the enemy to strike, so that against him one executes what one desire.⁵

Riposte, that is to say the thrust that the enemy throws on the one who struck first, or else a cutting blow or *estramaçon* as one wants to take it.

Straight line, is when one pursues the enemy, without turning or moving in any [other] direction.

When we talk about returning to *premiere*, *seconde*, *tierce*, or *quarte*, that is to say [returning to] on guard.

To leave, or removing the foot: means to bring the foot which is in front backwards.

Bande, is to say side.

Turning a point is taken as a thrust.

Schyvers or **eschiffement**, means to turn the body, to give way to the thrust that the enemy is throwing.

To *volter* with the right hand means to strike with a cut.

Mains droites rondes, and *revers ronds*, mean striking with the *revers* and the cut, without moving the hand from the place where it will otherwise be by turning it.

Esfalser: is properly evading with the body, and letting the thrust flow beside the body without offending it.

Cut the sword: is to beat the enemy's sword with your own.

²*voltant*

³*passagier*

⁴The spelling is idiosyncratic. Appears to be a form of *enganer*

⁵Florio (1611) has this as an Italian word meaning to call or to invoke, equivalent of the French *appel*.

Sometimes when we say to throw a thrust to the face, we mean to feint, and in this we must use our judgement when reading the article.

Rule for understanding which is the right or wrong edge of the sword

The right edge⁶ of the sword is that which offends, and the false edge that which parries.

Four ways passing.

The first pass is made outside your enemy's sword. The second is done on the side of his dagger. The third will narrow the measure, and also in a straight line. The fourth will pass one foot in front of the other, warning you that in passing, the left foot must move first.

To know what thing is tempo.⁷

Sword tempo, dagger tempo, and foot tempo are those that one can take, being in a position, when one wants to offend one's enemy.

What thing is within measure and out of measure.

The measure is understood as when one can reach the other with a thrust. Out of measure will be understood when one cannot reach the other.

What is the strong and the weak of the sword.

The strong is for defence, from the middle backwards, and the weak for offence, from the point to the middle.

To understand when you will be on guard with advantage.

Advantage is when you have the tip of the sword, straight at the enemy's shoulder, and his sword does not look at you, turning, however, in fourth guard on the right side of said enemy, having your dagger close to the guard of your sword.

To know which guard is more perfect for offence and for defence.

The high guards of *premiere*, *seconde*, and *tierce* will be to attack by feint or otherwise, and the *quarte* guard will be to wait.

⁶*droict fil* by which he means the true or long edge of the sword.

⁷Of course, the original uses the word *temps* meaning time or opportunity. Fencers for eternity have known this as tempo. The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* gives it as *La mesure du mouvement, ce qui mesure la durée des choses. Il est opposé a Éternité.* in their 1694 edition. Very Aristotle.

To understand how one must assault for the best.

When you want to attack the enemy, you must attack the nearest part, waiting for his riposte. Furthermore, wanting to attack him, you will put yourself on fourth guard. Then, passing with your left foot, you will give him a thrust straight to the face, and you will quickly put yourself back in *seconde* guard, so that by counter-passing⁸ with your right foot, you can give him a thrust in order to return to *quarte* guard, where, waiting for his riposte and coming to strike at you, you will parry it with your sword by passing your left foot to his right side, securing yourself with your dagger against the enemy's sword, in order to strike him with a *seconde*. And if he doesn't strike at you, you can start the above-mentioned *bottes*.

Against those who use feints.

When you understand what things are counters to those who use feints to outwit or deceive their enemy, you will do this to them. You will feint parrying with the dagger or the sword to give him an opportunity to *caver* and, when he *cavers*, you can strike him on the firm foot or in passing. You will do this again to him when he makes a feint, being in measure. That is, you will throw a resolute thrust to the body at him at the same time as you see him making the feint, turning on the side of his dagger, make a *chiamate* at him, which is to say to call him and wait for him to strike at you, in order to give him a riposte. You can even do this to him while he makes a feint at you, which is to parry his sword with your sword by striking him in two tempi, always expecting a riposte after having struck him.

Against those who strike on the firm foot.

You must hold the sword and the dagger in high guard and the tip of the sword must look straight at the enemy's face, revealing your body a little so that he has the opportunity to strike at you. Coming to push a thrust at you, parry it with your dagger under the sword, striking him at the same time one to the face, or to the stomach, bending the body while hitting him. You can also do this to him standing in the same guard while he strikes at you, which is to parry his blow with your dagger, striking a large *estramaçon* to his right arm. Also, you can cut or beat his sword by passing your left foot towards his right side, securing yourself with your dagger to touch him with a *seconde*.

Against those who strike first then withdraw.

You must parry his thrust with the sword or the dagger then, passing with the left foot, you must follow him in a straight line to put him in disorder, always threatening to hit him until you see that he is uncovered, which will then be where you will offend him, and you will promptly return into *seconde* to face⁹ his riposte.

⁸*en contrepasant*

⁹*aspecter*

Against those who never want to strike.

You must strike at the closest part, returning into *seconde* or into *quarte* guard to wait for the enemy's riposte when, coming to strike at you, you will take the parry that seems best and most convenient to you, being able to offend him with the cut as well as with the point.

Against those who parry with the sword or with the dagger.

To discover how they parry, you have to throw a *botte* between their weapons to force them to parry with the sword or with the dagger. If they parry with the sword, you will *caver* in *terce* to hit him on his right side. Again, you will be able to *caver* the sword over the point, which parries by going into *seconde*, then, passing with your left foot and securing yourself with the dagger, you will give him a thrust in *seconde*. You can also (during his parry) push at him a *terce* by advancing your left foot, always securing yourself with your dagger. If he parries with his dagger, you can *caver* over the point of the said dagger, piercing his left shoulder, or quickly marking him on the face. Then, putting yourself in *terce* guard and, holding your dagger close to the straight part of your sword¹⁰, you will wait for the enemy to riposte.

Against those who withdraw the foot.¹¹

You must make a show¹² of moving one foot, so that he has the opportunity to remove the foot, at which time you will quickly *caver* your sword on his dagger by going into *seconde* then, waiting for the enemy's riposte, you will strike him in the left shoulder or to the face, going in *seconde*.

Against those who give the sword to beat.

It is necessary to pretend to beat their sword with your dagger so that he has the opportunity to *caver* [around] it, and in *caving*, you will at the same time give him a thrust on the firm foot, or you will pass parrying with your dagger. You will also pretend to want to beat his sword with your dagger so that he draws it back, at which time you will pretend to strike so that he parries with his dagger, which will then make you *caver* on the point of his dagger, plunging a thrust into the left side or into the body or to the face. You can also pretend to beat his sword with your hand to see if he will move it from its place. Not doing this, you will beat it then thrust at him on the firm foot, or by passing. You can also make it appear to the enemy that you intend to beat his sword with yours to encourage him to *caver*, or to withdraw it. If he prepares to *caver*, you will parry with the sword by passing the left foot to the enemy's side right, securing yourself with your dagger by putting yourself in *seconde* to offend the closest part of the said enemy. If he withdraws his sword back, you

¹⁰*la droite partie de ton épée*, possibly "the true edge of your sword"

¹¹*laisser le pied* is a common phrase. *Laisser* is given by Cotgrave and the *Académie* as to quit or abandon or remove. Withdraw seems to best fit this context.

¹²*monster de passer*, show, demonstrate or indicate

will threaten him with a thrust to the body in order to force him to parry it with his dagger. Doing so, you will give him a *botte* over the dagger, turning on the side of his dagger¹³ by going into *seconde*, and holding your dagger close to your sword you will reveal the left side to him awaiting his riposte.

Against those who hold the dagger very forward and the sword at the rear.

You must place yourself in *seconde* or *tierce*, holding your dagger close to the guard of your sword, or on your right arm, turning from the side of the enemy's dagger, always starting to turn with the left foot first, and holding the right to ready to strike the nearest part, always remembering the riposte that your enemy can throw. Striking at you on the firm foot, you will parry with your dagger giving him a *botte* in *seconde* to his right side. And when he passes, you will *caver* the sword on the point of his dagger, striking him in the body between the weapons, parrying his blow with your dagger. You can also make feint at him outside the dagger and give him a thrust to the left side, and other strikes in large quantities both on the firm foot and with cuts as by feints and *cavers*.¹⁴

To break the enemy's design.

To break the design of an enemy, you must beat his sword or dagger with your sword, turning and making *chiamates* to encourage him to strike first. When he does this, you will parry his thrust, giving him another to the place you find the most convenient.

To make the enemy strike where one wants.

Use this method, which is to hold your sword in *tierce*, and your dagger near your right arm, so that the enemy cannot strike except to the left side. You can also position yourself in *quarte*, and holding your dagger joining the sword, so that he has the opportunity to strike at you on the right side. You can also open the weapons while in a high guard, either *premiere* or *seconde*, holding your dagger on the left side, and this guard will be for waiting and for attacking your enemy in the way you want.

Against those who pass.

You must give them the high sword to beat so that they have the opportunity to pass, at which passing you will let the front foot to slip itself behind, parrying their blow with your dagger to strike them with a *tierce* or a *seconde*. You can also turn a point at him, or take a counter-tempo with the strong of your sword by meeting the weak of that of the enemy. You can also cut or beat away his sword, securing yourself with your dagger to the enemy's sword to free yours in order to thrust at him in *seconde*. Also, you can withdraw your sword in *tierce*, your dagger at its guard, attacking him with a thrust. Finally, you can *caver* the

¹³*la bande de son pognal*

¹⁴*cavements*

sword on the point of his dagger, turning in *quarte*. You will hold again your sword at him long and low so that he can beat it, which, when it comes, you will *caver* yours on your dagger, striking him in *seconde*, taking however his sword with the dagger. Again you will evade with the body,¹⁵ parrying his thrust with your dagger to touch him in *tierce*. It is also possible to give him the sword between the two weapons so that he beats it with his dagger. At which time, you make a *quarte*, turning the left foot backwards.¹⁶ Finally, you will present him with your sword low so that he can beat it. Doing this, you will withdraw your foot going in *quarte* and, parrying his blow with your dagger, you will give him a big strike in the spine.¹⁷

How one must govern himself with a man against whom one has never fenced.

To know what your enemy wants to do, give him the advanced sword with the body curved and the dagger close to your sword, with which you will approach him, to see if he will want to parry it with his dagger or with his sword, then you will govern yourself according to your judgement, having discovered what he wants to do. But, be advised, that if he parries with his dagger, to *caver* your sword in giving him a thrust to the left side, turning to the outside to put yourself in *seconde*, waiting for the riposte. If he parries with a *main droite* with his sword, you will *caver* yours in giving him a thrust in *tierce* in the right shoulder, going into *quarte* guard to wait there for the riposte. And if he doesn't want to parry with the sword or the dagger, you can offend him at the nearest part, in order to encourage him to strike you. And if you see that he isn't moving, approach him softly.¹⁸ Softly narrow the measure to attack him.

Against those who hold the weapons apart.

You must hold your weapons narrowly, going in a straight line between the enemy's weapons, striking straight into the body so that he parries with his sword or dagger. If he parries with the sword, you will *caver* yours on the right side by passing with your left foot, assisting your sword with your dagger, to strike him with a *seconde*. If he parries the dagger, you will *caver* the sword to give him a thrust in the left shoulder while turning to the outside then, placing yourself in a *seconde* posture, you will wait there for the enemy's riposte. Again, can you do a *quarte* with your left foot between the weapons taking his sword with your dagger, from whence you can give him a blow when you are close to him, remembering to pass promptly, and put yourself back in *quarte* guard to wait there for his riposte.

¹⁵*tu schyveras le corps*

¹⁶At last, a proper *volte*!

¹⁷*l'eschine*

¹⁸*pian*, Cotgrave suggests "to march leisurely, goe faire and softly"

Against those who uncover the right, or the left part.

The counter is to strike at them to the uncovered part, warning you, however, not to strike with resolution, so that the one who is uncovered has the opportunity to strike at you. And if he doesn't want to strike, you can give him the *botte*, putting yourself again on guard. If you hit him in a high place you will go in *seconde* and wait for the riposte, always advising yourself to offend the part that is closest to you.

Against one who is always circling.¹⁹

One must close strongly to the side to which he moves, holding your weapons very narrowly and your dagger close to your sword, uncovering half your body to him to entice him to strike you. And if he does not want to strike you, you will seek the means to surprise him on the movement of the [his] foot, both to one side and to the other.

Against those who place themselves low, holding their dagger close to their swords.

For a counter, you will give him a *botte* over the dagger, either in passing or on the firm foot. You can also make a *tierce* by beating his sword with your dagger, either on the firm foot or in passing. Again, can you make a *tierce* over his sword by meeting the weak of it with the strong of yours, passing your left foot forward, and securing yourself with the dagger towards the enemy sword. You can also make a feint at him between his weapons to encourage him to parry with the dagger, at which parrying you will *cover* the sword on the point of his dagger passing with the left foot to the right side of the enemy, whose sword you will seize with your dagger, offending him with a *seconde*. You can also make a feint above his dagger and strike him with a thrust between the weapons, passing on his right side, securing yourself with your dagger towards his sword, and promptly putting yourself back on guard, awaiting his riposte.

The way to attack with a thrust with advantage.

You will place yourself in *quarte* guard turning on the side of the enemy's sword. And being somewhat out of measure, you will strike him straight in the face passing with your left foot, then going to *seconde* and, counter-passing with your right foot, you will thrust him with all your strength. You will let your sword return in *quarte* guard to wait there for the riposte, which, thrown at you, you will parry his thrust, or *estramaçon*, with the sword,

¹⁹*Voliger*. This term needs some exploration as it is not simple to translate in this context. The *Académie Française* gives a number of definitions, "running on horseback here and there with lightness and speed," and "As bees and butterflies fly here and there around flowers." Cotgrave gives a more useful definition, "to vault, or tumble; also, to curve, or manage in a (narrow) circle." The *Trésor de la Langue Française* provides the most useful definition, specifically in the military domain with citations of sixteenth century usage, "to move rapidly from one side to the other around an enemy in order to harass him." I've translated it here as "circling" and "to circle" but it also includes notions such as Silver's "fly in, fly out."

securing yourself with your dagger against the enemy's sword. [The enemy] not wanting to strike you, you can always do what I said here above. Be advised when you begin to thrust at him, not to use feints, but always resolve to go with one or two thrusts, being the best way to be able to attack because the enemy cannot do anything else than *caver* his sword with a firm foot, or make a *quarte* at you at the same time as he sees you pass with the left foot. These two *bottes* can be made but, to counter, you can parry them with your dagger, attacking him at the same time as he strikes at you.

What guard is the most perfect for waiting against all the *bottes* that can be made.

The *quarte* guard is the most perfect for waiting against all the *bottes* that can be thrown, warning you to parry with your sword the blow that the enemy will throw at you. Then, seizing his sword with your dagger, you will give him great thrusts in passing or on the firm foot, always turning on the right side of the enemy as much as you can, always waiting for him. And when you have offended him, you will immediately put yourself in *quarte* guard with the persistent intention of remaining there.

Advising to hold the dagger in your hand well.

Be warned never to hold your dagger forward, except when you look to seize or beat the enemy's sword, for fear that holding your dagger forward like this, you may be injured in the hand, or in the arm, and also to hide what you want to do.²⁰ Besides, your body is much more covered by it, and your enemy does not have much play or means to offend you. Now to hold your dagger well, you will hold it close to your sword, a little distanced from its guard, being in *tierce* guard, or else in *quarte* guard.

Against those who want to cover your sword with theirs.

For the counter, you will put your sword outside the enemy's presence, the same guard you find yourself in, holding the dagger near the hilt of the sword, and when your enemy comes for the touch, he is forced to go outside your presence at which time you will make these *bottes* at him. You will put yourself in *tierce* and, when he wants to touch your sword, you will *caver* yours attacking him in *tierce*, or passing your left foot in front, securing yourself with your dagger on the point of his sword, you will strike a thrust in *seconde* at him, or in *tierce* passing on his right side. You can also, at the same time as you look to touch his sword, pass in front hitting him with a thrust under the right side under his sword, securing yourself with your dagger. Also, if you were in *quarte* guard, and he wanted to touch your sword, at the same time you will *caver* it to the inside, seizing his sword with your dagger to push a thrust into his body, either on the firm foot, or with a pass that you will make with the left foot on the side of his dagger. Further, you will be able to *caver* the

²⁰*pour ne donner à cognoistre ce que tu veux faire*, literally, to not give to know that which you want to do.

sword over the point of his, then, securing yourself with the dagger, give him a *botte* on the firm foot between his weapons, or you can pass, if you want, to the side of his dagger.

Rule to observe against someone who wants to be the first to thrust or cut.

Be warned never to parry, and let all his blows go in vain yielding²¹ with the body, and with the left foot backwards, and when his *botte* has passed, you will be able to offend him in his nearest part, evading the grab²² in all ways. And even if he doesn't want to strike at you, you can always offend (as I said) the closest part, waiting for his riposte. When he strikes at you, you will try to put him in disorder to surprise him at the same time.

How many *bottes* can be made on the guard of the left foot.

When you find someone on the left foot, you will turn to your advantage on the side of your dagger, and when you want to circle,²³ be advised to move the left foot first, holding your sword in *terce* and your hand next to it, throwing at him on the firm foot a strike under the arm. And if your enemy holds his dagger a little lower than his sword, you can give him a thrust in the left shoulder, always holding your dagger close to your sword, in order to be ready for a riposte. This will be for play, or in earnest.²⁴ You will be able to offend the enemy's hand with point or a cut. If you offend him with the point, you will go to *seconde* to wait there to riposte. If you strike him with a cut with a *main droit*, you will go into *quarte* guard. And if you hit him with a *revers*, you will go in *seconde* holding your dagger near your sword, which will be straight, waiting for his response. If the leg of the one who is on the left foot is advanced, you will feint to give him a thrust to the face, who going to parry, you will give him a *jartiere*²⁵ with a *main droit* to the left leg going in *quarte* guard to wait for the riposte. These are the *bottes* that can be made against those who stand on the left foot. But if someone, being there, wants to pass, you will present him with the sword to beat, so that he passes. And when he passes, you will withdraw the foot by turning a large *revers estremaçon* to his head, or across the arm, or you will pierce him with a *seconde*, always parrying with your dagger.

How many *bottes* can be made against the *premiere*, *seconde*, and *terce* guards.

For the counter, you will put yourself in *quarte* guard, turning to the right side of the enemy, and holding your dagger on the left side, not too high, not too low, uncovering your right side so that the enemy has the opportunity to strike first. If he strikes, you will parry with your sword by passing to his right side, and seizing his sword with your dagger, you will deal him a thrust in *seconde*. And if he wanted to *caver* his sword, you will easily take it by

²¹*obeysant*

²²*prinse*

²³*voltiger*

²⁴*à bon escient*

²⁵Literally, a garter, meaning a cut around the leg above the knee where a garter is worn

seizing the same parry and will give him a *tierce*, securing yourself with your dagger. This can be done when he wants to move. If he does not move, you will *caver* the sword on the right side of his and, carrying your dagger to meet it, will pass forward to deliver him a thrust in *tierce*. You can also beat his sword with yours passing your left foot to his right side, securing yourself with your dagger. But if by chance he withdraws his sword, you will make a show that you want to strike him, so that he has the opportunity to parry with his dagger. And at the same time as he passes, you will *caver* the sword on the point of his dagger striking him in the body, quickly retiring in *seconde* to await his riposte. These *bottes* can be made on the *premiere*, *seconde*, and *tierce* guards. But when the sword is further forward than the dagger, you will begin to attack the left part, being advised, however, of the response which was just thrown at you (as most often happens). You will seek (after having hit him on the left side) to go in *seconde* to offend him on his right side when he throws the riposte at you. A large number of other *bottes* could be made, but to summarise or make it short, I consider these to be the best.

How our body must operate for the best.

What you understand about how our body must operate, being divided into two parts, one of which is called the right part, and the other the left. The noblest of the two is the one who offends, which is called the right. The other which is called the left will be used for defence, although many say that the left part attacks. The left foot will be to gain the place²⁶ or measure, and the dagger for assistance as I said above. And in order that you understand what is called the pass on the inside, it is when you pass in *quarte*, between the weapons or otherwise. The pass on the outside is when you pass outside the enemy's sword.

Warning against those who want to strike first.

To encourage your enemy to strike first, you must give him an opportunity²⁷ so that he can strike, uncovering the body a little, or holding your weapons open while securing yourself with your dagger. You can also stand in a very narrow guard, uncovering the left side to entice him to give you a *botte* above your dagger, which will then be [that you will turn and give him a thrust. Again, can you *caver* the sword over his dagger touching him with a *tierce*, while he wants to make a *botte* over your dagger. You can also withdraw your dagger and your sword, and put it outside that of the enemy's to strike him a thrust in the right shoulder. It is possible to make several other *bottes* against those who want to make a strike over the dagger.

To know whether it is better to wait or to attack.

Both are good. But I am of the opinion that waiting for him is better than attacking him. And if a man did not sometimes strive to attack, he would always have much more

²⁶ *gainer le terren*

²⁷ *commodité*

advantage in waiting, the reason being this: that whoever attacks, inconveniences the body, and he who waits does not inconvenience himself, speaking of those who know how to keep the guards in waiting. For my part, I would like to feint to attack in order to encourage the enemy to strike first so that I had time²⁸ to thrust to or offend his closest parts, with the intention of waiting for his riposte, preparing nevertheless to counter. For otherwise, we would run great peril to want to attack the body of the enemy in the first tempo. However, I would never recommend this if the man did not have great opportunity in doing so.

The Play of Sword and Cape, Both with the Point and the Edge.

Note first never to throw your cloak at the enemy, unless you have subjected his sword which impedes you, because by throwing your cloak at him, he could well offend you. So that you know what the cape can be used for, which is a help to the sword, you will be advised to parry with your sword all the blows that are thrown at you, being in *quarte* guard with the cape next to the hilt of your sword, always securing you with it when it occurs, to defend you from the blows that will be thrown. But if someone throws an *estramaçon*, you will also parry with your sword, always holding your cape close to the guard of it, whether it is in *tierce*, or in *quarte* guard, even when you[]will be on the left foot. However, the most perfect guard for attacking with sword and cape is *tierce*, and the best for waiting is *quarte*, against all guards, uncovering the right side, and turning to the outside, so that the enemy cannot attack you except with the point. If you want to attack him, you will throw a feint to the face to make him parry with his sword. If he parries with the right hand,²⁹ you can make these *bottes* at him. When you see that he wants to parry with his sword, you will touch him with a *tierce* while passing with your left foot, securing yourself with your cape at the guard of the enemy's sword. Also, you can do this while he is parrying, that is, you will *caver* the sword in *tierce* on his, passing with the left foot, and, placing your cape on the guard of that of the enemy, you will deal him a thrust to the side right. You can also *caver* the sword on the point of your enemy and, passing your left foot to his right side, you will make a *seconde* at him. And if he doesn't want to parry, you will strike your thrust at him in the body or to the face. If he wants to strike at the same time as he sees you striking, you can cut his sword passing to his right side, securing yourself however with your cape on the hilt of the enemy sword. Again, when you begin to throw at him a feint to the face, and you see that he intends to parry your strike with a *revers*, you can *revers* your sword under his, and place your cloak under the enemy's sword, making a *tierce* at him in the stomach, turning to the outside. Moreover, when he wants to pass, you will *caver* your sword on the point of his and, using your cloak, you will pass with a *quarte* of the left foot between the weapons. He can also be given a *revers* through the leg, or through the face, passing on his right side, withdrawing your sword in *tierce* or *seconde* in order to make a thrust at him, advising you to always hold his sword with your cape. Further, when you want to attack

²⁸*J'eusse mesure de*

²⁹Does *main droite* here mean "right hand", ie: with the sword, or does it mean a "forehand cut"?

him, remember to throw two *bottes* at him. The first will be a thrust and the second a cut either to the face or to the legs. And when you make a cut, remember to withdraw back by giving him a *chiamate* because the edge offends him more and greatly breaks his measure. Further, when you attack him, always remember to offend the nearest part, waiting for the riposte, and this is the way to attack with a *seconde* or a *tierce*.

To wait for sword and cape.

When you want to wait, you will put yourself in *quarte* guard holding the cape next to the hilt of your sword to defend yourself from the point and from the cut. If the enemy thrusts at you,³⁰ you will parry it with your sword, passing your left foot in front of the enemy's right side, quickly using your cape to hit him with a *seconde*. If he throws an *estramaçon*, you will parry with your sword, securing yourself with your cloak, and passing to the right side of the enemy to strike him with a *seconde*. Again, when he strikes you with a *main droite*, you could parry to the right with your sword, and pass your left foot to the right side of the enemy to meet his *botte* and, using your cape, you will be able to offend him with the point, or with a cut to the face, or to the leg. And if he throws a *revers* at you, meeting your blow, you will pass with your left foot and you will secure yourself with your cape, if necessary, to give him a thrust or a cut to the face, or to the leg. If he throws a *revers* at you, you will parry with a *revers* meeting his *botte*, passing your left foot forward and, using your cape, you will strike him with a *seconde*. This could be done with a number of hits, but these are better for edge weapons.³¹

***Estramaçons* play and knowing how they are done, their names, and what they are called.**

So that you know how many *estramaçons* can be made, it can be a *revers*, a *main droite* and a cleaving *estramaçon*,³² both from the right as from the *revers*. However, wanting them to do well, the *main droite* must start on the right side, holding one's arm high coming delivered into fourth guard.³³ The *revers* begins on the left side and ends in *tierce* holding one's dagger close to one's sword. Being delivered with the edge, there are the *mains droites rondes* and *revers ronds*, but those mentioned above are the best. If someone throws a *main droite* at the head, you will parry from the right with your sword. If he throws a *revers*, you will parry with a *revers*. If he throws at you with a cleaving cut,³⁴ you will parry with the sword and with the dagger, if you have it, or the cape. For one or the other will greatly help you to free your sword from that of the enemy, in order to more easily attack him. If he throws a *main droite* at you, you will parry with your sword, passing your left foot to the right side of the enemy, securing yourself with your dagger in order to give him a

³⁰*te tire une pointe*

³¹*l'espée blanche*

³²*estramaçon fendant*

³³*en quatriesme garde*

³⁴*fendant*

thrust or give him a *revers* to the face, or in the leg, or in the arm. When he strikes you with a *main droite* to the head, you can cross your dagger with your sword, and give him a *gartiere*,³⁵ or hold your sword and your hand tightly, turning a little to his right side to give him a thrust in the body, or in another place that you judge most convenient. You can also parry with your dagger, passing the left foot of the right side of the enemy, to whom you will threaten³⁶ with a thrust in the face, or in the body. One can also (yielding the body) let his *estramaçon* strike go in vain, and at the same time that his *main droite* will have passed, you will pass on the same right side striking him with a *tierce*, securing yourself with your dagger at the shoulder of the enemy. And if he throws a *revers* at you, you will parry him with a *revers* with your sword, aiding yourself with your dagger to the enemy's shoulder, putting it under his sword, and turning a *main droite* at him, or a *revers* to the face, holding always your dagger under his sword. Also, you will be able to let his *botte* go in vain, which, having passed, you will be able to touch him on the firm foot, or in passing. These are the *bottes* that can be made against right-handers and against the *revers* when they come to be resolutely thrown.

To attack, it is necessary to go with the point and the edge.

To make a good cut when you want to attack, you need to start with the point in *seconde* or in *tierce*, to be in the most perfect guards for attacking. Remember this when you want to begin your attack: that you must make a thrust with resolution to the enemy's face, so that he will be forced³⁷ to parry. If he does not parry it, let the *botte* go to his face. And if he parries it with his dagger, you will turn a *main droite* to his dagger arm, or to the head, while going into *quarte* guard to wait for his riposte, withdrawing yourself back a little out of measure. And if the enemy parries with his sword, you will make at him a *revers* on his arm, or on his head, going into *seconde* or *tierce* guard to wait for his riposte. You can also throw a thrust between his weapons so that he parries it with his dagger, at which time you can give him a *revers estramaçon* with your sword on his arm, or with a *main droite*, retiring into *tierce* or *quarte* guard holding your dagger close to the guard of your sword to wait for his response. Also, you can strike over his dagger so that he parries it. But, if at the same time, he throws a thrust at you, you will be able to parry it with your dagger, and give him a *revers* on his sword. Besides, when you are the first to throw a thrust at him, and he parries it with his sword, you can then cut him on the leg with a *main droite*, or with a *revers*, depending on which you see is for the best. If he parries with a *revers*, you will attack with a *revers*. There could be several other cutting strikes and *estramaçons*, but I consider these to be the best.

³⁵*jarretière* - literally, a garter, but in this context a hamstring or knee cut.

³⁶*tu bailleras*

³⁷*sujer* or *subjer*

Against someone who wants to attack with the point then turn a cut.

If someone wanted to attack you with a thrust, and strike you with a cut (as I have already said) you will do this to him when he throws the point at you. You will parry the blow with your sword, so that he has the opportunity to turn to a *main droite*,³⁸ then pass your left foot forward and parry with your dagger in order to push a thrust at him in the face. If he turns a *revers*, you will parry with your sword and hit him with your dagger in the right flank, or you will secure the enemy's sword with it and give him a *seconde*. Besides, when you have stayed his *revers* with your sword, you can put your dagger under the enemy sword and hit him with a *revers* to the leg, withdrawing your sword in *tierce* in order to give him a thrust. Even if he wanted to throw a *main droite* at you, and you had parried it with the sword, you could nevertheless join the enemy's sword to your dagger to use yours to give him a thrust, or cut, turning to the right side, and holding your dagger under the enemy sword without ever losing it.

How to govern oneself fencing against left-handers.

When you take the sword against a left-hander, you must do the exact opposite that you would do against a right-hander, both in striking and in parrying. Even on the pass, both with the sword and the cape as with the sword alone. It is therefore necessary for your advantage to circle to the outside of the left-handed enemy's sword, and to find a way to make him strike first. And if by chance he does not want to strike, you will try to offend him at the nearest point, taking care however that he does not strike you at the same time, but always looking for ways to make him strike first to give him a bigger blow and, if it is possible, that it will be from above his sword so that it always remains under yours. The best and most advantageous guards that can be done against a left-hander are *premiere*, *seconde*, and *tierce*, always holding your dagger next to your sword. These guards being the surest and best that can be made, advising you to always circle to the outside of your enemy's sword so that it may be subjected under yours. So, this will be the manner you have to observe against a left-hander, both at the guards and as in passing, warning you when you want to pass, to always move the left foot first for your advantage. And if by chance the left-hander were to place himself at the same guards in which you find yourself and he wanted to await your attack, having found you in *tierce* or *seconde* guard, you will then place yourself in *tierce* holding your dagger close to the guard of your sword, and the left foot narrowed close to the right to strike him straight in the face with a thrust between his weapons to force him to parry as many do. If he parries the sword, you will put your dagger under it, giving him a *revers* to the leg, or to the face, or a *main droite* to the head, withdrawing your own sword to redouble your thrust, always holding your dagger under the enemy sword, doing this with the [your] sword. And for positional advantage,³⁹ make sure that he always goes to the outside, circling towards your side so that he cannot offend

³⁸The original text has *a fin qu'il aye occasion de volter de droite* (so that he has the opportunity to turn the right), which makes no sense. The *droite* must refer to a *main droite* or nails-up cutting strike.

³⁹*l'avantage du cheminer*, lit. the advantage of the path

you with the sword, or the dagger. This is the true means that must be used to attack. If someone wanted to make the same *botte* that you would do, to counter you will do this to him to interrupt his *botte* while he wants to start throwing it. Which is, when at the same time you put your sword on his by hitting him with a counter-tempo, withdrawing yourself into guard. This is the quickest attack that can be made, and when the enemy wants to start striking you, you will deliver your *botte*. One can also do this to him. When he strikes first, you will go and parry him with the sword to give him reason to turn a cut, which coming to finish you,⁴⁰ you will parry with a *revers* of the sword. And, if he strikes with a *main droite*, you will carry the dagger under his sword. One can also place oneself on the left foot, holding the dagger over the sword, and always circling outside your enemy's sword who, beginning to strike, you will quickly take a tempo passing outside his sword, giving him a thrust in *quarte* under the left flank in the manner that I said above, which will be more for waiting than for attacking, and counters the guards that the left-handed enemy will make. The counter guards for the left-handed enemy are understood when the sword is outside that of the said left-hander, who can do the same on his part, like the said right-hander. But the difference between the two will be known in the execution of the advice that I gave above. In this, then, is the advantage of left-handers. But if the right-hander observes the rule that I mentioned above, and the left-hander does not know it, the left-hander will be much more hindered than the right-hander.

Brief speech about the sword alone regarding the point.

In the sword alone, there are four guards, of which the best are these two, namely *quarte* to wait, and *tierce* to attack. In these two guards, it is possible to make a *tierce* and a *quarte*, and a beat of the hand, and a pass below. They can be done simply yet these are the briefest and best, which can also be done in counter-time. Many say that Agrippa was the inventor of the pass below, seeing two roosters fighting together, one of which rising and jumping to go to the other to peck its crest, the other passes under to save itself.

Against the above-mentioned blows and against those who would like to attack.

When someone wants to pass with a *tierce*, you will make the counter him a counter-time at the same time as he wants to turn the hand in *tierce*.⁴¹ You can also *caver* your sword, going to him in *seconde* and, passing with your hand, you will strike him with a thrust. Moreover, you can make at him a pass below the sword, and what's more, give him a *quarte* over his sword. You⁴² can also withdraw the foot, parrying with the hand, in order to give

⁴⁰*lequel venant à te parfaire*

⁴¹*tu luy feras au contraire un contretemps au mesme temps. . .* It's as clumsy in the original as in translation.

⁴²The original text has "He" but this makes not sense in the context of the rest of the sentence.

him a inside strike to the spine.⁴³ These are the *bottes* of the *tierce* guard, when one would do them in passing.

Against those who *quarte*, who beat the sword with their hand, and who pass under the sword.

For the counter, you will counter-attack him with the strong of your sword against the weak of his by giving him a thrust to the right shoulder. You can also make a pass under his sword attacking him with a *tierce*. You can also parry his blow with the sword striking at him to the face or in the body. It is also possible to remove the foot, parrying with the hand, striking him in the spine. These are the counters of those who *quarte*. Against someone who beats with the hand, you will present him with the sword to beat and, when he beats with the hand, you will quickly *caver* it, turning a *quarte* at him in the left shoulder, always passing forward. You can again present him with the sword to beat so that he passes. But when he beats the sword and passes, in the counter, you will remove the foot and beat his sword with your hand, striking him with a *seconde*. These are the counters to those who beat with the hand. Against someone who wants pass below, you will hold your sword high so that he has the opportunity to pass below it. You can also cut his sword by passing your left foot to his right side and, taking the hilt of his sword with your hand, you will offend him with a thrust in *seconde*. Further, you can remove the foot readying your hand in the parry in order to give him a big strike in the spine, or somewhere else that you think is more convenient. These are the true counters that can be done on the above-mentioned *bottes*.

Universal Play of the Sword both with the Thrust and the Cut

Be warned against those who would like to throw *estramaçons* to narrow their measure to be closer with the first movement that they make when throwing a cut so that, at the same time, you give them a resolute thrust, either with a firm foot or passing. Wanting to attack, you will begin a thrust in *tierce* at the shoulder of the enemy so that he has the opportunity to parry it. If he parries, you will *caver* under his arm and give him a thrust in *tierce* passing on his right side. Again, when he parries, you will make a *revers* at him to the leg passing to his right side, taking his sword under your arm to make it fall from his hands, withdrawing with yours in *tierce* to be able to strike with the point, warning you that you when you feint at him (as I said) that he makes a pass under your sword and even if he wants to parry, for the counter, you will be advised to cut his sword. And if he parries your feint, you can *caver* your sword on the point of his, making a *quarte* at him.. If he parries to the outside or inside, you will give him a thrust to the face so that he parries. And if he

⁴³*Éschine* has been translated as spine, it's denotative meaning. However, the 1694 edition of the *Dictionnaire d'Académie Française* carries a verb *éschiner* meaning *Rompre l'échine. Tuer, assommer dans une meslée, dans un combat, dans une desroute*, "To break the back. To kill in a melee, in a fight."

parries with resolution, you will pass your sword under his or will hit him with a *main droite* on the leg, also being able to *caver* the sword over his to give him a thrust in *tierce* while passing on his right side, and making a grip at the guard of his sword. Moreover, if he parries, you will be able to offend him with a *tierce* under his sword by passing with your left foot, and likewise seizing the hilt of his sword. And when you make feints at him (as I said above) and he does not want to parry them, he cannot do anything against you except a counter-tempo, or a pass under your sword. If he passes under the said sword, or beats it with his hand, you can in the counter make a counter-tempo passing under his sword. If he wants to pass under yours, you will cut at him on the sword, passing your left foot to his right side and taking hold of his guard. And if he wants to beat with the hand, you will give him a *quarte*. If the enemy does not want to parry and he wants to strike (as I said above), you will do all these counters at him. Moreover, when you want to attack with two tempi, you must start with the point and, when he parries, turn a *main droite* going into *quarte* guard. And if he parries from the right side, you will turn a *revers* at him going in *tierce*, always waiting for his riposte to be able to defend yourself from his thrusts and his cutting strikes. And if he throws a riposte with the point at you, you strike against the engagement⁴⁴ a counter-tempo either in *tierce* or in *quarte* guard. If he throws a cut, you will parry with the strong of your sword, and if you parry on the right side, you will *volter* at him on his head, or across the leg, either from the firm foot or in passing. If you pass, you will make a grip. But if you strike on the firm foot, you must withdraw while waiting for a riposte, as I said above. If you see that the enemy wants to attack, you will put yourself on guard, exposing the right side to him, so that he cannot strike you elsewhere. If he strikes on the firm foot, or passes, you will do all these counters at him. When the enemy strikes at you on the firm foot, you must parry with the sword and pass your left foot to his right side to make at him a *tierce* or *seconde* very close to the hilt of his sword. And if he strikes with a *passade* [sic], you will remove the foot parrying the strike with your sword, making a grip at the guard of his sword. If he wants to strike you with the point and then, after making a *volter* with a *main droite*, you will pass your left foot forward while he *volters*, parrying the blow with the strong of your sword and making a grip thrusting at him in *seconde*, leaping⁴⁵ however to his right side for your advantage. Moreover, if you find yourself in *tierce*, and the enemy throws a thrust at you, you will be able to make sufficient *bottes*, firstly beating with the hand, a pass under the sword, taking a counter-tempo, cutting the enemy's sword, parrying his thrust with the sword, striking at him in two tempi, parrying his trike with the strong of your sword, giving him with a *main droite* to the head or across the leg. And in conclusion, you will be able to parry his thrust and give him a *revers* across the leg, either in passing or on the firm foot. But, if he wants to give you a *revers* to the head, as soon as⁴⁶ he has thrown the strike to you, you will parry with a *revers* with your sword passing to his right hand, securing yourself with the hand on the guard of it [the enemy's sword]. Or, having parried his *revers* with the sword, you will be able to give him a

⁴⁴*l'encontre*

⁴⁵*voltigeant*

⁴⁶*subitement*

revers to the leg, putting the *revers* hand under the sword of the enemy.⁴⁷ Again, you will be able to meet the weak of his with the strong of your sword when he throws a *revers*, hitting him with a counter-tempo. Enough other things could be done as counters but this is a conclusion to what I have written: the best are those of the sword, which will be understood in this way. If you attack, start with the point and deliver a cut, which is two tempi. If you wait, you will parry, that is to say, assure yourself very well with the parry which is the best and then offend the nearest and the most convenient part of the enemy that you can, and in this manner double-time⁴⁸ is understood.

Which type of weapon is more advantageous: the sword and the cloak, or the sword and the dagger.

The sword and the dagger are more advantageous to those who know how to use them than the sword and the cloak. And those who understand nothing are similar to those [preferring] the cloak and the sword. The advantage of the sword and dagger will be to throw first a resolute thrust in *seconde*, so that the enemy has the opportunity to parry before his sword. At this parry, whether straight or *revers*, as he wishes, you will pass and will touch him with your dagger, advising you that if you strike him in the face, it will always be the best for you. The advantage of the sword and the cape will be to stand in *quarte* guard, circling to the outside of the enemy fleeing his sword and his dagger, never striking first, but only waiting. And when he strikes, you will parry, and just as quickly you will riposte, putting yourself back on guard while always waiting, and fleeing from the enemy's attack.

The end

⁴⁷*en mettant la main de revers sous l'espee de l'ennemy.* A little confusing here.

⁴⁸*deux-temps*

Very Beautiful Speech for Fencing with the Sword Alone, Made by the Late Patenostrier of Rome.

Let us say in the first place with the common opinion of all fencers that we have four guards, so named for the consecutive order of them, which can be reduced into two [categories] putting *premiere* and *seconde* in one, *tierce* and *quarte* in another.

Now being on guard consists of two things, which are the application of the body and of the sword, and to speak about how we put the *tierce* into play as the most perfect, and in which all the observations of striking well can be better kept, adding that which is said about it can be partly applied to others.

Thus, the application of the body to be on guard is that the body is quite curved, the left side and the head resting and inclining on the left leg whose knee must be bent, the left arm raised close to the face like a half circle, the right leg straight or very slightly bent, the two heels facing each other, showing only the flank which you cover with your right arm well extended downwards, and a little advanced above the right thigh, the tip of the sword looking at the front of the right shoulder of the enemy, a little higher than the bandoleer,⁴⁹ and crossed somewhat inwards, suitable for going on all sides into the enemy's sword.

The strike consists of four things: the movement of the arm, and of the hand, the advancement of the feet, the *eschiffement* of the body. And in the understanding of these four things arise all means and strikes, and thrusts at which we will stop, leaving *main droits*, *renvers*, and *estramaçons* behind, the thrust being the most beautiful and the most principal part of the sword alone, which we will divide into five kinds, namely, *inquartade* or *quarte*, *tierce*, the pass below, the beat and enter, the *quarte* over the sword.

The *quarte* is done by first advancing the hand in a straight line, and then turning it inwards close to arriving, advancing strongly with the right foot moving the right shoulder forward, and the left backward, passing the left foot backwards to dodge better,⁵⁰ carrying your arm well extended so that your hand is as high as your shoulder, extending to the right shoulder of the enemy. There are several other observations that I will make at another time.

The *quarte* of the left foot is done as of the right foot, with the same movement of the sword and turning of the body, and only differs in the passing of the left foot, which is done forward instead of as in that of the right foot where it is done backwards. Now the opportunity to make these *quartes* is when the enemy finds himself uncovered on the inside.

The *tierce* is done by first advancing with the right hand and foot turning the fist to the outside, the arm well extended forward, so that it arrives with the right foot carrying the body on the flank, the right shoulder always forward, and the left behind, so that there is

⁴⁹*fourniment*

⁵⁰A *volte* or *girata* perhaps?

less risk, being covered both inside and outside, whether the enemy evades⁵¹ or comes in counter time.

The pass below is done with a *tierce*, so much so that there is no other particular observation than lowering the body well on the [opponent's?]outside, and slant a little with the point of your sword on the inside, and it is done at the same on one side as with the other foot. And sometimes again lowering the body alone when your enemy comes from great resolution.

The beat and enter is also done in *tierce* and it is nothing more than defeating the enemy's sword. And you must be careful that beating with left hand does not cause the right arm to move backwards.

The *quarte* over the sword is made like the ordinary *quarte*, except that this one [ie: the ordinary *quarte*] is made on the inside of the sword, instead of the other being made on the outside.

How to execute it. It is on the long guards, or on a slightly advanced third, by widening the fist to the outside, and lowering the point to the inside.

Now having spoken of the five thrusts and on the manner of making them, which was as succinctly as possible, we will now speak in this very way of the measure that must be taken to make them and of the means to win this measure.

Measure is nothing other than the distance at which one can reach the other with a single extended step. Yet there are three kinds of it: just measure, narrow measure, and wide measure. Just measure is when one can reach the other with one step. Narrow measure is to be able to reach one another only extending the sword, or by half an unforced step. Wide measure that we use for *tierce* is when one cannot arrive easily with one step alone so that, to accomplish it, one takes half a step ahead followed by another forced step to arrive. What do all of Patenostrier's attacks consist of, which he calls the resolute play,⁵² and readying so as not to have any dithering in his attack?

The measure, whatever it may be, is gained by four kinds of application of the foot, which I call the advancement, approach, joining, and chasing of the foot. The advancement of the foot is when, seeking a narrow or just step, you gain the measure advancing the right foot forward to redouble [with] the right foot again, or going with the left foot if it seems good to you. The approach of foot is when you are in a wide measure, you approach your left foot halfway to the right to then move your right foot. Joining is when, seeking a just or narrow step, you join your left foot to your right, to then have a way to advance your right foot forward. The chasing of the foot is when you, being wide of step, approach the left foot and push the right further forward than it was.

One of these applications is not enough, whether your enemy at your first adjustment

⁵¹*esfalse*

⁵²*jeu de resolution*

retreats, or whether you strike with a large step,⁵³ or whether you want to gain a narrow measure, as much as it is sometimes necessary to make one or two afterwards, in which case it is necessary to note to never make two similar [steps] ones after the other.

It is necessary to observe before any adjustments of foot to advance the sword a little and to keep an eye on that of the enemy so as not to be surprised, and to be able to go in counter time to your advantage.

I do not in any way approve of stamping and of sliding the foot as being a stupid, badly done, and inconvenient thing.

We must now talk about the practice of thrusts and first of all about the *quarte*, it being brought into play first. It is used when the enemy is well exposed on the inside, and is used with all feet and measures, depending on whether we find ourselves near or far from each other, but with different reasons more fully described elsewhere, which we leave out here for the sake of brevity.

You must be careful with both *tierce* and *quarte*, and the pass below, not to strike if you see your sword under that of the enemy. Thus, before striking, if you do not want to break measure, you must hold your body back and remove your sword from beneath that of the enemy, and place it at equal height, and then strike. In short, to make it succeed, this blow, like all the others, must be thrown with as much speed as possible, stealing time from the enemy aptly and nimbly.

About Counter Strikes

Now to remove the confusion of so many counters that can be alleged and put forward in the time of the sword. I find that in an assault made by two who want to strike with resolution, accompanied nonetheless with judgement, being in reasonable measure, it can only run three *tempi*, unless the two who are striking want to, as we say, confuse by striking without passing, with lengthening the body backwards. I do not doubt that in the said assault that more *tempi* cannot be run, and that we won't have the leisure to find an infinity of counters. But this is more disorder than fencing, and is done more often between people who want to demonstrate knowledge of counters rather than have the resolution to take the tempo and attack. The first *tempo*, therefore, of those that I have said that can be carried out in a resolute assault, will be the counter *tempo*, which is when your enemy comes, and you go. The second is when your enemy comes, and you evade.⁵⁴ The third is when your enemy feints and evades, and you counter evade.⁵⁵ Let's talk about the last when your enemy makes a feint and evades, and you evade, and evade again, which is very difficult to do.

Now I call a *tempo* that in which time is lost and not an action. I do not mean, however, that any movement of the sword, in any way whatsoever with loss and no loss of *tempo*, is

⁵³ *soit que tiriez en un grand lieu*

⁵⁴ *esfalsez*

⁵⁵ Both uses of "evade" have *esfalser* in the original.

not a *tempo*, as I reserve myself to speak more fully elsewhere and in a more intelligible manner, but not for the present, so as not to be long.

Thus, to take, the *tempo* for the counter *tempo*, you must carefully watch when the enemy wants to go, get ahead of him with speed and length of foot and with hands to make your more advantageous thrust. Rather, it should be noted that in any counter *tempo* of *quarte* or *tierce* to carry the sword higher than that of the enemy.

Moreover, taking the *tempo* well is when you can meet the enemy on his steps wanting to gain the measure, which is when you are wanting to approach. But it is necessary to judge whether the enemy is prepared to strike suddenly or only to approach, which I know is very difficult for it is a guess. However, to those who have been fencing for some time and who have taken the trouble to consider the movements and actions of when many people want or do not want to strike, it is not so difficult [as] when it is against *principians*,⁵⁶ who do not know what they should do. They make a great show of resolution, thinking to astonish their enemy and make way for their sword, in which they do not succeed, remaining confused not knowing which side to take. This also happens to old scholars who lack practice.

Now, whoever does not want to use counter *tempo*, either jus having evaded the enemy or beaten with the hand, the remedy is to parry with the sword, which is a general rule.

That any thrust that comes on the inside must be countered by turning the fist to the inside, as if trying to make a *quarte*. Any thrust that comes on the outside is called parrying by turning the fist to the outside, which is sometimes parried outside without advancing the foot, and sometimes by advancing the foot. And it seems to me that in wanting to use the advance of the foot, it will be better with the left, to better avoid the grip to which everyone resorts to missing the thrust. And in order to guard oneself from it having parried, you must go to the grip yourself, withdrawing the right arm backwards, as much to hinder the grip by the enemy, from whom you will give the tempo and the ease parrying with the right foot, as to better disengage your sword in order to gain it afterwards.

There is yet another kind of parrying to the inside, turning the hand to *tierce*, chasing the enemy's sword with your left hand, and throwing a reverse *estramaçon* at the enemy's head.

Another kind of parrying is what we call cutting with the sword, which is done parrying at the beginning with a *quarte* and finishing by turning the hand into *tierce* and lowering the enemy's sword to the outside of your right hand.

When it comes to grips, the best are those that are made on the enemy's right hand, or those that hold the enveloped sword between your arms and your left side. Now before going to the grip, either in *quarte*, in *tierce*, or on the pass below, you can make an *estramaçon* with a *main droite*, or with a high or low *revers* on your enemy. And on the release of the *estramaçon* that you must do by withdrawing backwards your arm, or in other words the sword, you must go to the grip as I said in this article. All these ways of gripping

⁵⁶The meaning is not terribly clear. The term may be one of derision, "little princes," but more likely refers to beginners, "learning the first principles."

the body and the collar, as well as giving the leg, are more properly for wrestling than for weapons. However, they are not condemned,⁵⁷ thus holding them good for those who have the strength and skill to use them.

The end



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⁵⁷Also, censured or disallowed