

The Officer's Staff

by

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The First Exercise:
Of the partisan or hunting staff

The Sixth Exercise:
Of cut-fencing



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About this document

This document presents a partial English translation of Matthias Schlüter's *Baculus Militaris Compendiosus Infanterie oder Officirers Stab*, published in Marburg in 1674. This book is not so much a fencing treatise, as a drilling manual with exercises for the partisan (also called half pike or hunting staff), the flag, the pike, the musket and the cutting sword (*Hiebdegen*). In the following, you will find translations of the first Exercise (partisan or hunting staff) and the sixth Exercise (cutting sword).

The title of the work, as explained in the foreword, suggests that the work is like a staff to an officer, that he can use when instructing his soldiers, both to lean on, and to beat them with.

While Schlüter's work is rather concise, especially the section on cut-fencing, it does provide interesting information. His description of the use of the partisan, half pike or hunting staff is very similar to the writings of Pascha on the same topic (particularly Pascha's works on the hunting staff or half-pike, as Pascha wrote a separate work on the partisan¹). However, while both Schlüter and Pascha present the same techniques, in the same context, and using very similar descriptions, the lessons given are not all identical. For example, where Lesson 10 in Schlüter's work instructs you to make a Spanish thrust and then a strike, Pascha's most similar lesson² instead instructs to strike first, then make a Spanish thrust. Schlüter's lessons thus provide a welcome addition to those provided by Pascha.

Schlüter's very brief section on cut-fencing (which refers to an unpublished, longer work of which it merely presents a partial extract), does provide an important confirmation that is not found

1 For the hunting staff, cf. Pascha, J.G. (1660) *Kurtze Anleitung des Jäger Stocks, oder Halbe Pique*, Halle in Sachsen; and Pascha, J.G. (1670) *Kurtze Anleitung wie der Baston a deux Bous, das ist Jægerstock, halbe Pique oder Springe-Stock eigentlich zu gebrauchen*, Leipzig. For the partisan, see Pascha, J.G (1673b) *Deutliche Beschreibung Unterschiedener Fahnen-Lectionen in Acht Spiel eingetheilet, nebst dem Piquen-Spiel, Pertuisan und halben Pique, oder Jägerstock*, Halle in Sachsen.

2 Lesson 6 in the 1670 edition of Pascha's *Jägerstock* treatise; lesson 5 in the 1660 edition.

as explicitly in either Pascha's works or those of Henning,³ on the directions in which the four main cuts are made.

3 Pascha, J.G. (1673) *Vollständiges Fecht- Ring- und Voltigierbuch*, Halle in Sachsen; and Henning, E. (1658) *Kurtze jedoch gründliche Unterrichtung vom Hieb-fechten*, Königsberg.

The first Exercise.

Of the partisan, half pike, or hunting staff.

Observations.

The partisan, or half pike, is carried in four manners or ways:

1. Under the right arm, lying in the right hand, the rear point high.
2. Under the right arm, the right hand lying on top, the rear point high.
3. Under the right arm, holding it with the left hand, the right hand resting on the left wrist, the rear point high.
4. Floating in the right hand, though such that the front point is carried lower than the rear one.

There are five Actions of the partisan:

1. Thrusts.
2. Spanish thrusts.
3. Strikes.
4. Blows.
5. Parries.

1st Lesson.

Reverence.

Holding the partisan under your right arm (as intended in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd observation) or floating in your right hand (as intended in the 4th observation), with your right foot standing in front, make a *reverence* by lowering the front point, and at the same time make a *coupé* with your right foot.

2nd Lesson.

Posture or stance.

Set your left foot in front, grip the partisan with your left hand in front, two spans from the point, and with your right hand behind, two spans from the other point, so that you hold it on your right side, at the middle of your body and parallel to the ground. Thus set yourself in posture.

3rd Lesson.

The thrusts with a step forward.

Having gripped the partisan at your right side, with your left [hand in front] and your right hand behind, and standing with your left foot in front, thrust forward and glide your left hand to your right hand, stepping forward with your right foot. Reach forward with your right hand, to where your left hand had been, and, stepping forward with your left⁴ foot, let the hind point go on your left side. Thrust forward again and glide your right hand to your left hand, stepping forward with your left foot. Reach forward with your left hand, to where your right hand had been, and, stepping forward with your right foot, let the hind point go on your right side. Now make this thrust as often as you like, then set yourself in posture.

4th Lesson.

Two thrusts in a square, that is, to all four sides.

Make a thrust with glide forward on your right side, stepping forward with your right foot. Make another thrust with glide forward on your left side, stepping forward with your left foot. Make yet another thrust with glide to the [left]⁵ side, throwing your right foot over your left and stepping around to your left while thrusting. Make another thrust with glide to the left side, stepping forward with your left foot to that same side. Then make two such thrusts backwards, and then two thrusts to the right side. Once this is done, set yourself in posture again.

5th Lesson.

The Spanish thrusts with a step forward.

Make a Spanish thrust forward. On the right side, glide your right hand to your left hand, all the way to the back-most end, stepping forward with your right foot. Make another Spanish thrust forward. On the left side, glide your left hand to your right hand,

4 My interpretation of this step is that it is a small step to recover the posture, where the left foot does not pass the right, and the right foot thus remains in front.

5 The original text incorrectly reads “*R. Seiten*”, i.e. “right side”.

all the way to the back-most end, stepping forward with your left foot. Make as many such Spanish thrusts on the right and left as you like, then set yourself in posture.

6th Lesson.

Two Spanish thrusts in a square to the left.

Make two Spanish thrusts as taught in the 5th lesson: 1. two to the front; 2. two to the left side; 3. two to the back; 4. two to the right side. Then set yourself in posture again.

7th Lesson.

Two Spanish thrusts in a square turning around to the left.

Make two Spanish thrusts as in the 5th lesson. 1. two backwards; 2. two forwards; 3. two to the left side; 4. two to the right side. Then turn to the left and set yourself in posture again.

8th Lesson.

One Spanish thrust in a square turning around to the left.

This lesson is done just like the 7th lesson, except that you make [only] one Spanish thrust each time.

9th Lesson.

The strikes over the head with one Spanish thrust in a square to the left.

Make one Spanish thrust with glide forward, stepping forward with your right foot. Change your hands and strike down from above, with your left hand in front and your right hand behind, stepping forward with your left foot. Then also do this to the left side, then backwards, and again to the right side. Then set yourself in posture again to the front.

10th Lesson.

The strikes over the head with one Spanish thrust in a square turning around to the left.

Make a thrust with glide turning around to the left. 1. Backwards, stepping forward with your right foot. Change your hands and strike down from above stepping forward with your left foot. [2.] Make another Spanish thrust with glide turning around to the left, to the front, with a step forward of your right foot. Change your hands and strike down from above stepping forward with your left foot. [3.] Make another Spanish thrust with glide turning to the left, to the left side, with a step forward of your right foot. Change your hands and strike down from above stepping forward with your left foot. [4.] Turn around to the left once more, and make a Spanish thrust to the right side, stepping forward with your right foot. Change your hands and strike down from above stepping forward with your left foot. Turn halfway to the left once more, so that you come to stand where you started, and set yourself in posture.

11th Lesson.

The strikes over the head [going] forwards.

Glide your right hand up to your left, and strike down from below stepping forward with your right foot. Glide both hands back again, and strike down from above stepping forward with your left foot. Make as many of these strikes right and left as you like, and then set yourself in posture again.

12th Lesson.

Two strikes over the head in a square to the left.

Make two strikes with a step forward with right and left: 1. to the front; 2. to the left side; 3. behind; 4. to the right side. Make two more to the front, to where you started, and set yourself in posture.

13th Lesson.

Two strikes over the head in a square turning around to the left.

Make the two strikes, then turn around: 1) behind; 2, turn around to the left again, and make two to the front; 3. turn halfway to the left, and make two to the left side; 4. turn around to the left and make two to the right side; 5. Turn halfway to the left, and make two to the front. Then set yourself in posture.

14th Lesson.

The half strikes or parries from above with both hands, for- and backwards.

Grip the partisan in the middle with both hands. Let the upper point go down from above and past your left side stepping forward with your right [foot], then past your right side stepping forward with your left [foot]. Do this several times, stepping forward, [and then stepping backwards],⁶ until you come to the place where you started. Set yourself in posture.

15th Lesson.

The half strikes or parries from below with both hands, for- and backwards.

Let the lower point go up from below past your right side, stepping forward with your right foot, and past your left side stepping forward with your left foot. Do this several times, stepping forward, and then stepping backwards, until you return to the place where you started. Set yourself in posture.

16th Lesson.

The half strikes or parries from above with one hand, for- and backwards.

Grip the partisan with only your right hand, and perform the 14th lesson, following it word by word. Then also with your left hand.

6 This was omitted in the original text, but added here based on lesson 16.

17th Lesson.

The half strikes or parries from below with one hand, for- and backwards.

Perform the 15th lesson with only your right hand, first forwards then backwards. Then also with your left hand.

18th Lesson.

The strikes down from above [going] forward.

Grab the partisan with both hands at one end, and strike down from above stepping forward with the right foot. Glide it past your left side so that you hold the partisan with both hands behind at one end again, and strike down from above stepping forward with your left foot. Make as many of these strikes down from above with steps left and right as you care to.

19th Lesson.

Two strikes down from above in a square to the left.

Make two strikes down from above with steps forward with your right and left feet, as taught in the 18th lesson. Make another two strikes like that to your left side. Thirdly, make two more strikes to the back. Fourthly, another two strikes to the right side. Finally, make another two strikes forwards. Then, set yourself in posture.

20th Lesson.

Two strikes down from above in a square turning around to the left.

Make two strikes down from above, firstly backwards, then forwards again, thirdly to the left side, fourthly to the right side. Each time turn around to the left.

21st Lesson.

One strike down from above in a square.

Firstly, make a strike down from above behind you, turning around to the left and stepping forward with your right foot. Glide, make another strike down from above to the front, where you stood before, turning around to the right and stepping forward

with your right foot. Glide, make another strike down from above on your right side, turning around to the right and stepping forward with your left foot. Glide, make another strike on your left side. Finally, make another strike down from above to the front, where you started.

22nd Lesson.

The strikes up from below [going] forward.

This lesson is done just like the 18th lesson, except that you strike up from below to the adversary's elbow. Otherwise, with the strikes you always glide and step forward.

23rd Lesson.

Two strikes up from below in a square to the left.

Do this lesson just like the 19th lesson, except with strikes up from below.

24th Lesson.

Two strikes up from below in a square turning around to the left.

This is done just like the 20th lesson, except that the strikes are made up from below.

25th Lesson.

One strike up from below in a square.

Do this lesson as the 21st lesson, except that you make the strikes up from below.

26th Lesson.

The side-blows with one hand, right and left, forward and backward.

Turn your right hand and glide [the partisan] past your left side. Hew a full circle with your right hand, stepping forward with your left foot. Glide the partisan and grab it with your left hand turned, and with this hew a full circle stepping forward with your right foot around to the left. Make 4 or 6 more such blows. Then, also

make these blows going back. When you hew with your right hand, step back with your right foot, and likewise, when you hew with your left hand, step back with your left foot.

27th Lesson.

The side-blows with two hands, forward and backward.

Grab the partisan with your left hand at the end, and your right hand one span above your left hand. Let it drop onto the middle of your left arm and rest there. Hew to the right side with both hands, stepping forward with your left foot. Let the partisan drop onto your right arm and rest there. Hew to the left side with both hands, stepping forward with your right foot. Make 4 or 6 more such blows with steps, then also make these blows going back. When you hew to the right, step with your right, and likewise, when you hew to the left, step with your left.

28th Lesson.

The head-blows around to the right.

Grab the partisan with both hands, and let it rest on your left arm. Now, standing with your right foot in front, step with your left foot to the right side and hew a full circle to the right around [your] head, and let the partisan drop onto your left arm again. Step into the other corner again with your left foot, and hew a full circle to the right around [your] head. Let the partisan drop to your left arm again. Step once more with your left foot into the third [corner], and finally into the fourth corner, always hewing to the right around [your] head, while stepping forward with left. Now, standing there where you started, with your left foot in front, set yourself in posture.

29th Lesson.

The head-blows around to the left.

This lesson is done like the previous 28th lesson, except that the blows are done to the left, and to all corners you step forward with your right foot.

30th Lesson.

The turn around the neck.

Grab the partisan one span from the lower point, place it on your right shoulder, let it go around your neck.

31st Lesson.

The turn around the hand.

Hold the partisan by the middle, and let it run around your right hand.

32nd Lesson.

Reverence.

Once you have the lower point in front in your right hand, let this run past your right foot, on your right side, so that it comes up behind, under your right arm, while the other comes low in front. Then make a *coupé* with your right foot.

The following list gives the English translations used for any technical terms encountered in the partisan section, as well as the terms used in the original German.

blow	Hieb
<i>coupé</i>	<i>coupée</i>
glide	<i>glissade</i>
to glide	<i>glissiren</i>
in a square	in <i>quadrat</i>
parry	<i>Parade</i>
posture	<i>Positur</i>
reverence	<i>Reverens</i>
stance	Stellung
step forward	Zutrit, Zutritt
strike	Schlag
thrust	Stockade
to thrust	stoßen
turn	<i>volte</i>

The sixth Exercise, with the sword. Of cut-fencing.

Which consists of three fundamentals.

The first fundamental.

Concerning the sword alone, this consists of:

1. The division of the blade,
2. The holding of the sword

The second fundamental.

Concerning the body alone, consists of:

The position and protection of the body.

The third fundamental.

Concerning the sword and body together, consists of:

1. The defense,
2. The offense,
3. The division of the human body.

These three fundamentals are divided into 18 chapters.

1. The terms.
2. Of guards and cuts.
3. Of parries.
4. Of single feints.
5. Of double feints.
6. Of triple feints.
7. Of fourfold feints.
8. Of slices.
9. Of slices with one feint.
10. Of slices with two feints.
11. Of engaging and slicing.
12. Of going straight up and down and slicing.
13. Of making a beat and slicing.
14. Of counter-slicing.
15. Of circling.
16. Of disengaging or going through.

17. Of cutting past.

18. Of going underneath and taking the adversary's sword.

Here, I want to extract and place those pieces most necessary for a soldier to know, which are the cuts and parries contained in the second and third chapters, and leave out the other lessons (which I prepared for print in the year 1667, but which remain unavailable as I have not found a publisher⁷).

⁷ *“auß mangel des verlegers”* – an alternative translation could be “due to a mistake of the publisher”.

Extract of Chapter 2. Of the guards and cuts

Firstly, of the guards.

There are four main guards.

1. The *prim* guard, which is the most dangerous.
2. The *secund* guard, which is the most secure.
3. The *tert* guard, which is the best.
4. The *quart* guard, which is the weakest.

Secondly, of the cuts.

There are four main cuts.

1. The *prim* cut is cut up from below, 1. to the face, 2. to the right arm.
2. The *secund* cut is cut on the right side, 1. to the head, 2. to the chest, 3. to the lower body, 4. to the feet.
3. The *tert* cut is cut down from above, 1. onto the head, 2. onto the right arm.
4. The *quart* cut is cut on the left side, 1. to the head, 2. to the chest, 3. to the lower body, 4. to the feet.⁸

From the four main cuts derive four in-between ones, that are called the false cuts.

1. The false *prim* is cut between *prim* and *secund*.
2. The false *secund* is cut between *secund* and *tert*.
1. The false *tert* is cut between *tert* and *quart*.
1. The false *quart* is cut between *quart* and *prim*.

⁸ I.e., the *quart* is cut to the opponent's left side. The *secund* is cut to the opponent's right side.

Extract of Chapter 3. Of the parries from the four main guards.

1. From the *prim* guard.

The *prim/secund* cut is struck away and parried with the point to the right side without movement of the right arm.⁹

The *tert/quart* cut is parried by lifting the point into *secund*.

2. From the *secund* guard.

The *prim/secund* cut is parried with the *prim*.

The *tert/quart* cut is parried with the hanging *secund*.

The false *quart* cut is also parried with the hanging *secund*, but with the point lowered.

3. From the *tert* guard.

The *prim* cut is parried 1. with the *prim*,
2. with the half *quart*.

The *secund* cut is parried by turning into *secund* with the point raised.

The *tert* cut is parried 1. by turning into *secund*.

2. by turning into *quart*.

3. with the hanging *secund*.

The *quart* cut is parried 1. by turning into *quart* with the point raised.

2. with the hanging *secund*.

The false *quart* cut is parried like the *quart* cut, except that the blade hangs over, and the body is bent well.

4. From the *quart* guard.

All cuts are only struck away a little with the point.

⁹ The interrelation of these three statements is not clear in the original text, as no punctuation marks are used.

Though these two chapters on cut-fencing should be explained more extensively, I think this is unnecessary here, as then the compendium and this work would become too large.

The following list gives the English translations used for any technical terms encountered in the cut-fencing section, as well as the terms used in the original German.

to circle	<i>circuliren</i>
cut	Hieb
to cut	hauen
to disengage	<i>caviren</i>
to engage	<i>stringiren</i>
guard	Lager
to make a beat	<i>battiren</i>
cutting past	verhauen
parry	<i>Parade</i>
to parry	<i>pariren</i>
position	Stellung
<i>prim</i>	<i>prim</i>
<i>quart</i>	<i>quart</i>
<i>secund</i>	<i>secund</i>
slice	Schnitt
to slice	schneiden
<i>tert</i>	<i>tert</i>