



School voor Historische Schermkunsten

Several pieces of fencing with the rapier

A translation of Ms.germ. Fol. 1476 from the
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin

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About this document

The following text is an English translation of the German Ms.germ. Fol. 1476, located in the *Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz*. This translation is based on the transcription made by Jan Schäfer, available [here on his Fechtgeschichte Blog](#). As indicated by Jan Schäfer in his original research, the original manuscript is a fragmentary work, consisting of two sheets and dealing with Fencing with the Rapier. It is most likely a set of personal notes written down by a student of fencing, in the 16th or 17th century, and the suspected author is a certain A. Herr von Biberstein.

In the following translation, I have tried to stay as true to the original text as possible. Technical terms and less straightforward translations have been indicated in footnotes. Finally, in the translation, “<...>” indicates parts of the text was missing from the transcription as they were not readable. These omissions are minor.

Acknowledgement

Jan Schäfer reviewed this translation, and his excellent insights helped improve this work.

A list of several pieces of fencing with the Rapier as I have learned in Frankfurt on the Oder.

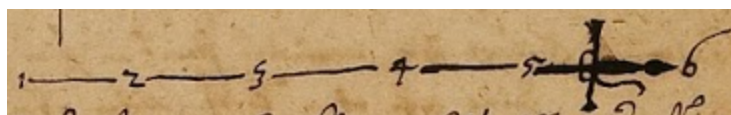
The five



cuts.

The displacements also to be learned properly.

The division of the blade.



1. If someone cuts at you on the inside, in front at your blade, do not let [it] connect, but while the blades will touch one another, let it run off¹, step with the left foot straight to the man, and cut him on the outside with a turned² hand to the head.
2. Do thus. If someone cuts at you on the outside, then do not let [it] connect, but let it run off. Step with the left foot well aside to your right, and cut him on the inside to the head.
3. If someone cuts at you on the outside to your right elbow, then step in quite straight towards him with the left foot, and run him to the breast with the turned hand. Though you should note to which you cut or thrust, you must always turn your head to the other side.
4. If someone cuts at you on the inside hard in front at the blade, then bend your body back, let it³ go through underneath, and swiftly run him to the breast with a step to and an extended arm with turned hand.

The tearing⁴

5. If someone cuts at you on the inside to your head, then tear away the weak of his blade with the strong of your blade. Then step with your left foot aside behind your right, let the blade go around the head, and cut him on the inside again to the face. Thus also if someone cuts at you one the outside, then again tear his blade away, let yours go around the head, step in with your left foot straight to him, and

¹ *ablauffen*

² *verwendeter* – this implies that the hand in a pronated position

³ i.e. your blade

⁴ *reissen*, an alternative translation could be “wrenching”

cut him on the outside to the head. Or do thus, cut him on the inside strongly on his blade, and then act as if you have over-committed in your cut. If he now lets it run off, then swiftly tear away the cut coming from him <...> let your blade go around the head, and with a step to, cut him to the head. Also do him this from the other side.

Suppressing⁵.

6. If someone cuts at you on the inside, then let the strong of your blade fall strongly on the weak of his blade, thus suppress his blade. Then slice him through the face with the short edge on the outside. Then let your blade go around the head, and with a step away cut him to the face on the outside, with which you come back into the displacement. If he cuts at you on the outside, then suppress him his blade as before on the outside, slice him through the face with the half edge on the inside, and once again cut him to the face with a step away.

Hand-cut.

7. Threaten him a cut on the outside to the head with a half step to. If he then goes up to displace [this], then step with your left foot behind your right, bend your body well back, and cut him with extended arm with the third under-cut⁶ to the fist. Or with a step to threaten him a powerful over-thrust⁷ on the inside. If he goes up to displace [this], do not let the blades touch one another, but go through beneath his blade and cut him on the outside on the arm, or cut him on the outside up from below strongly at his blade. If he lets it run off, then bend your body back well, nimbly cut him with extended arm by means of a middle-cut⁸ on the arm.

Circle-cut⁹

8. Cut him strongly at his blade on the inside. If he lets it run off, then, then nimbly jerk¹⁰ your weapon over the head (but bend your face well to the other side), and cut him once again to the face on the inside, before his cut comes. But you will pull your head to the other side for this reason that, because of that, when his cut comes it goes away alongside you. You can use this cut just so to the other side.

Leg-cut.

9. Strongly cut him on the inside at his blade. If he lets it run off, then tear his coming cut away, bend over your body well, and pull your head to the other side. Nimbly jump to and cut him on the leg, so that after the cut is completed you swiftly run past in front of him, so that he cannot overtake you with another cut.

Heel-cut.

10. Strongly cut him on the inside at his blade. If he lets it run off, then tear his coming cut away or only displace it. Nimbly jump to and swiftly run past by his right side, and then cut him on the heels.

⁵ *dempffen*

⁶ *underhauw*

⁷ *oberstich*

⁸ *mittelhauw*

⁹ *circellhauw*

¹⁰ *zucken* – this could alternatively be translated as “twitching”

Alike-cut¹¹.

11. If someone cuts at you on the inside to your head, then with an extended arm turn the strong of your blade against his cut, so that the point of your blade goes away by your right side. Do not let his cut meet <...> but let it run off, and swiftly cut him to the face on the outside with a step to of your left foot. Also do so from the other side.

Middle-cut.

12. Strongly cut him on the inside at his blade. If he lets it run off, then swiftly jump past¹² by his right side and cut him on <...> breast. Or strongly cut him up from below on the outside at his blade. If he lets it run off, then nimbly jump past by his left side, and cut him on the breast.

Over-grip¹³.

13. If someone cuts at you to the head on the inside, jump with the right foot to catch his cut with the strong of your blade, but pull your head well behind your blade. When you now take his blade, then tear his rapier away from him with the left hand under itself¹⁴, and cut him on the head on the outside. Also do so when [someone] cuts on the outside.

14. You can also displace in a different manner. Namely thus. Strongly cut him on the inside to his blade. If he lets it run off, then catch his cut with the strong of your blade, so that your blade's point points off by your left arm, and cut him to the head on the outside. Also do so from the other side.

Follow several pieces.



The half circle



The round enticement¹⁵



The half circle.

The enticement



from the



¹¹ *gleichhauw* – “alike-cut” is one possible translation. This could indicate that you reply to a cut to your head with a cut to his head. An alternative translation would be straight-cut.

¹² *fürüber*

¹³ *obergrieff*

¹⁴ This is a literal translation of German “*undersich*”.

¹⁵ *verführungk*