

The Artful Fencer

Or
The well-practiced and famous
Fencing Master of Old

THEODORI VEROLINI.

Short though clear description and demonstration
Of the
Free Knightly and Noble

Art of Fencing
With rappier, dussack and sword

1679.

An English translation of the first three parts by:

Reinier van Noort

v1.1, 12-04-2015.



Copyright 2015 by Reinier van Noort. Subject to Fair Use. Users may, without further permission, display, save, and print this work for personal, noncommercial use, provided that the copyright notice is not severed from the work. Libraries may store this material and non-commercially redistribute it to their patrons in electronic or printed form for personal, non-commercial use, provided that the copyright notice is not severed from the work.

About this document

Published by Joann Bencard in Würzburg in 1679, the book ascribed to the fencing master Theodori Verolini* consists of selected excerpts of the longsword, dussack and rappier sections of Joachim Meyer's "*Gründtliche Beschreibung der Kunst des Fechtens*", originally published 109 years earlier in Strasbourg. In addition, the book contains a German translation of Nicolaes Petter's "*Klare Onderrichtinge der Voortreffelijcke Worstel-Konst*", first published in Amsterdam in 1674. Neither original author is credited for their work.

This document contains an English translation of the first three parts of the Verolini treatise, i.e. those parts dealing with the longsword, dussack and rappier.

Acknowledgements

Scans of Verolini's treatise were made available by the Herzog August Bibliothek and Roger Norling of HROARR.

This translation was mainly based on the transcription published by András Berki and Györgyi Czifra, available on the HEMAC Website.

In making this translation, the Fechtkunst Glossary prepared by Jeffrey L. Forgeng was of great assistance (though I did not always follow it). This glossary is available on [the author's website](#).

Finally, Jan Schäfer once again greatly helped out as editor of my initial draft translations.

I hereby thank all these people for sharing their hard work.

Reinier van Noort
Nordkisa, 12-04-2015.

* Note that in the original German title, "*Deß Weyland*" (translated as "of Old") can indicate that Verolini had died at the time of publication. (This was suggested by Jan Schäfer.) Furthermore, all text in this publication has been taken from the work of either Joachim Meyer, or Nicolaes Petter. This may suggest that Theodori Verolini was a fictional master, invented by the publisher to ascribe his plagiarism to.

The Artful Fencer

Or
The well-practiced and famous
Fencing Master of Old

THEODORI VEROLINI.

Short though clear description and demonstration
Of the
Free Knightly and Noble

Art of Fencing
With rappier, dussack and sword

From which then
Along with the attached

Art of Grappling

Can be learned how in all kinds of occurring situations, with various usual weapons,
the favourable student can be trained to agility, and can encounter his opponent
dexterously.

Illustrated in more than 130 displayed Figures
And divided into four parts.

First part.

Würtzburg,
by Joann Bencard, Bookseller
1679.

Content and clear account of the first part Of fencing with the sword and an ordering of the same.

I name the beginning the onset, when you set upon the man that you have in front of you. The middle, the working-amongst, or handiwork, when you remain in the bind or longer in your work against the opponent, and harass him with all swiftness. The end, the withdrawal, how a fighter can cut off and away from his opponent without harm.

The onset in the beginning happens out of or from the guards with the cuts, which are twofold, namely the main guards and the secondary guards, that arise from the main guards.

There are four main guards, the *Tag* or Upper-ward, the *Ochs*, the *Olber*, and the *Pflug*. There are eight secondary guards: Wrath-ward, Break-window, Long-point, Barrier-ward, Unicorn, Key, Iron-gate, Change. But as far as the sword is concerned the cuts are in two sorts, which two are generally named the straight and reverse cuts. The first are called the main or principal cuts, from which all other cuts have their origin, and of these there are four: Upper-, Under-, Middle- and Wrath-cut. The others are called the secondary, or derived cuts, and there are twelve of them, namely Squint-, Crooked-, Shorten-, Glinting-, Bruising-; single and double, Blinding-, Winding-, Crown-, Knuckle-, Plunge-, and Change-cut. From these two are taken the true Master-cuts, which are named so because all masterly and artful devices with the sword are grasped and completed in these, namely Wrath-, Crooked-, Athwart-, Squint-, and Crest-cut. And of all these I will clearly bring to the light how to complete and perform them in their description, when I come to the onset, and speak of the cuts.

The handiwork in the middle contains the greatest art, and all swiftness that can occur in fencing. Since this does not only indicate, how you shall bind the sword, wind, change, deceive, travel after, slice, double, let it run off, or in which manner you shall strike around, sling, slide in front, set aside, pull and jerk, block, grapple, run in, throw and press after.

Of the man and his division.

The man is divided into four parts, namely the above and under, and each of these in right and left. How the appearance of someone indicates what parts of him are above and below, and left and right, is explained by the image in Figure A.

Of the sword and its division.

The blade has two divisions. The first is into the strong and weak. The second into the short and long edge, i.e. front and back.

The part from the cross or hilt to the middle of the blade is named the strong of the sword. The weak is from the middle to the end of the same.

In general the sword has four parts as can be seen in Figure A.

The first is named the hilt, and contains the pommel and cross. Expedient for grappling, gripping, and throwing.

The second, the strong, is useful for slicing, winding, pushing and what is fenced from the strong.

The third part is the middle, which is used on every occasion.

The fourth is the weak, for changing through, flicking, slinging, for which you will have examples, then.

Of the guards or wards.

The wards and guards are graceful, in which the fencer positions and sets himself in the place before his opponent comes to him, so that he is not rushed unforeseen, and injured by him, setting himself against the counterpart. As a man is divided into four quarters, high, low, left, and right, there are likewise four openings in which to hit the opponent mainly. And as there are four openings, there are likewise four main guards or wards, from which all the others derive and arise, as there are *Ochs*, *Pflug*, *Tag* and *Olber*. But the others, that have originated from these, are Wrath-ward, Long-point, Change, Side-ward, Iron-gate, Hanging-point, Key, Unicorn, which then will be

treated orderly and briefly.

Ochs.

The upper part of a man is assigned to the *Ochs*, and as that part has two quarters, the right and the left, the guard of *Ochs* can also be divided into two, as is demonstrated in Figure B.

Pflug.

The lower part of a man is dedicated to the *Pflug*, and like that part has two quarters, the right and the left, hence the *Pflug* is also called the right and the left, or the point in the man's face is also the right *Pflug* in the conceived Figure B.

Tag.

Stand with your left foot in front, hold your sword high over your head, as in the Figure B¹.

Olber.

Stand with the left foot in front, hold your sword with the point stretched out in front of you to the ground, in front of your front foot, so that the short edge is above, the long below. Thus you stand well in this ward, as you can see in Figure C.

Wrath-ward.

Stand with your left foot in front, hold your sword on the right shoulder, see Figure E.

Long-point.

Stand with your left foot in front, hold your weapon with outstretched arms, long in front of your face, as Figure A teaches you.

Change.

Stand with your right foot in front, hold your weapon with the weak to the ground next to you stretched out to the side, as in Figure D.

Side-ward.

Stand with the left foot in front, hold your sword next to your right, with the point to the ground, as in Figure².

Iron-gate.

Stand with your right foot in front, hold your sword with the hilt in front of your knee, with strong³ hanging arms, as can be seen in Figure F⁴.

Hanging-point.

This guard is almost completely of the same shape as the *Ochs*, except that in the *Ochs* you hold the arm strongly⁵ up high, as in Figure B.

Key.

Stand with your left foot in front, and hold your sword with the hilt and crossed hands in front of your breast, as in Figure D.

Unicorn.

Come into the onset with the left foot in front. Wing up from both sides, as if you want to set

1. This is a typo and should be Figure C.

2. This should be Figure F. Note that the fencer standing in Side-ward in this figure grips the ricasso with his right hand.

3. It is not unlikely that instead of *starck* ("strong"), *strack* ("straight") was meant here.

4. Iron-gate is not shown here (see also Meyer, 1570).

5. See footnote 3.

yourself in the aforementioned Key, as in Figure E.

Of the guards.

Firstly, when you do the Upper- or Crest-cut, you will find three guards, as in the beginning you are in *Tag*, in the middle in Long-point, at the end in *Olber*, thus from the top down you have three wards or guards from A. and E. When you go up again from below with crossed hands to the displacement, you again find three guards. Namely at the beginning Iron-gate, in the middle the *Hangort*, at the end upwards at full height the Unicorn. If you pull your sword with the hilt in front of the breast, so that the half edge lies on your left arm, then you stand in Key. Thus you can go up and down in the line A. and E. from one guard into the other.

Of the other Lines, which strike diagonally downwards through the right Line, there are two. One that strikes from the right upper quarter, indicated with H. and D., and the other which goes from the left upper part to the right lower part, demonstrated in B. F.. You can now cut through which you want. If you then pull the strike up again with the long edge, then you again go through three guards, as at the beginning there is the Side-ward, in the middle again the Long-point, and in the end upwards the Unicorn. If you strike one through the above-mentioned Line, it can be from which side you want, then you come from the Change, through the Long-point, into the Wrath-ward. In striking up, you can also turn your sword in the Hanging-point, from which you come into the ward of *Ochs* when you go further upwards. Thus you always find at least three guards whenever you go through one of the demonstrated Lines.

But a good fencer will not habituate to wait long in his guard, but as soon as he can reach an opponent, he will attack him, and fence out his intended device.

Middle- or Across⁶-cut.

The Middle- or Across-cut can almost completely be performed as the Wrath-cut, only this is the difference that the Wrath-cut is performed diagonally over the point, but this one across, as recorded in the Figures C. and G.

Undercut.

Cut across from below, to his left arm, so that with your cross you come high above your head, as in Figure B.

Squint-cut.

Set yourself in the ward of the *Tag* or the Wrath-ward with the left foot in front. If someone cuts at you, then cut against it, but in the strike turn your short edge against his strike, as in Figure G.

Crooked-cut.

Stand in the Wrath-ward with the left foot in front. If your opponent cuts at you, then step with your right foot in front, cut with the long edge against his cut, between his head and his blade, as in Figure D.

Athwart-cut.

Place yourself in the Wrath-ward on the right side. Set your left foot in front, hold your sword on your right shoulder, as in Figure H.

Shorten-cut.

Strike with the half edge and crossed arms over his right arm to the head, as in Figure B.

6. *Überzwerch* is somewhat tricky to translate. It literally means “across” and thus indicates a movement or position crossing the centre line between the fighters. However, in some cases it could also be translated as “horizontal”. Here, we have chosen to consistently translate as “across”.

Bruising-cut.

When your counterpart cuts at you from above, then meet his strike with an Athwart-cut, as recorded in Figure K and I.

Winding-cut.

If your counterpart cuts at you from above, then cut from below with crossed hands, from your left to his sword, as in Figure H.

Crown-cut.

When your counterpart cuts at you from above, then go upwards with the cross across, catch him his strike in the air on your shield or crossbar.

Knuckle-cut, Plunge-cut, Change-cut.

The Change-cut is nothing else than always alternating the cuts before the man from one side to the other, from above to below, and back again, to make him err.

Shooting or Provoke-touching.

Shooting or Provoke-touching are almost one thing, which actually are not cuts that are cut but flicked.

Handiwork.

The full handiwork consists mainly of binding or staying, traveling after, slicing, striking around, running around, deceiving, flitting, setting aside, displacing, pulling, doubling, reversing, snapping, feinting, looping circles, winding, winding through, changing, Changing through, slicing off, pressing hands, sliding in front, hanging, wrenching out, barring, blocking, gripping over, running in, etc.

Binding, staying, feeling.

Is when the swords touch one another. Staying is twofold, when the swords held to each other, to see how the man wants to fight etc.

Slicing.

After you have received your opponent's sword with the bind, you will remain on there, to feel if he wants to go from the bind, or strike around. Let it fly, and before he can recover, you cut to the nearest opening.

Striking around.

When you are bound from your right against his left, and you go away again that bind, to strike around or flick to to the other side.

Deceiving.

When you show yourself with gestures as if you want to onset an opening on your counterpart, but you do not do it, and strike the strike in to another opening.

If your counterpart cuts at you from above, then step and from your right side, with a Middle-cut across, cutting his strike away from you with the long edge as it flies in, then through so that your blade flies around again, with the half edge against his left ear, as can be seen in Figure A.

In the taking-out course, let your blade, in one flight, fly with an Athwart-cut above around your head, against his left ear. Then pull your sword around your head again, and with the outside flat cut a strongly swung in strike on the outside to his right ear, as you see this flat strike painted in the large image on the right hand side in Figure K.

Hanging-point.

In the onset strike through powerfully from your left side upwards against his face, in one wheel once, twice, and the third time, however, always let your sword swing in front of your face, or turn into the Hanging-point, as the image on the right hand side in Figure F here presented teaches you.

Break-window.

If someone cuts from above, then cut against this from your left from below with the long edge, and when he takes his sword off yours again, and thus drives with his arms upwards, then in the meantime grip with your fingers over your cross on the blade, and drive with your blade over both his arms, as you see this on Figure M.

Step in haste, and cut in from below to his left side, so that your hands stay high. With this you force him to either displace you from his guard, or to cut in at the same time with a step back. If he then cuts, then note the moment the swords beat together, and pull around the head, and cut in to his right ear in one swing with crossed hands, with the short edge, as this Figure G⁷. shows.

A fine device from the reversing.

In the onset note and watch out for when your opponent rises before you. Then step and cut from your left side with the short edge and crossed hands to or over the right arm, but in this Crooked-cut step well to him, reverse your sword and wrench out downwards, on your right side. If he works upwards with his arms so that you can force him downwards, then drive with the pommel from inside between both his arms, loosen your left hand from the hilt, and with that grip your sword's blade, and wrench out upwards, as Figure O. demonstrates.

Counter for the Athwart-cut.

When you bind with someone from above, or cut in at the same time with him, then see whether he wants to strike around with the Athwart-cut. While he strikes around, preempt with the Athwart-cut below his blade to his neck, as Figure L. demonstrates.

Item, if he cuts-Athwart from below, so that you cannot come under it, then catch his Athwart-cut on your shield with a sliding in front, and thrust your pommel well from you above your right arm, and turn him the long edge over his blade on the outside up from below to the head, as can be seen in Figure N⁸.

A breaking for all Upper-cuts.

While you wind out the Under-cut through an Upper-cut against his face, in the same moment, step with the left foot further out to the left side back behind yourself. Then in stepping back, cut him through his face. Now, when this Under-cut with the stepping out, and winding out is performed and completed skillfully in one go, then it will go safely and well for you. From this Winding-cut many other and beautiful devices are taken and pulled off.

End of the sword.

7. Neither Figure G (there are two) shows this. Most likely, Figure K. is intended.

8. This Figure appears to be missing.

The Artful Fencer

Or
The well-practiced and famous
Fencing Master of Old

THEODORI VEROLINI.

Short though clear description and demonstration
Of the
Free Knightly and Noble

Art of Fencing
With rappier, dussack and sword

From which then
Along with the attached

Art of Grappling

Can be learned how in all kinds of occurring situations, with various usual weapons,
the favourable student can be trained to agility, and can encounter his opponent
dexterously.

Illustrated in more than 130 displayed Figures
And divided into four parts.

Second part.

Würtzburg,
by Joann Bencard, Bookseller
1679.

Content and clear account of the second part Of fencing with the dusack, and also in which order this fencing is described.

Since up to here the foundation has been laid with the sword, now follows the dusack, which takes its origin from the sword, as all fencing from the right source, whether it is performed with one of both hands. Therefore I want to place this here, not only as one of the most common weapons with us Germans, after the sword, but also as the beginning and foundation of all weapons that are used in one hand, and then treat and explain with all the surrounding and associated devices of the ordering.

Of the four cuts, how you shall perform and learn them rightly.

With this you can see and acknowledge, how one devices always develops from another, and originally one offers the other the hand. It is likewise with the four intended cuts without foreknowledge, and understanding of several lines is useful for the teaching of the cuts. Necessarily it follows, that I first teach you such lines, and to what extent they are named. As now there are no more than four lines, likewise there are four streets or lines through which they are cut, as in Figure A. Thus firstly the vertical line, through which the Upper-cut is directed and cut, and which is therefore named the Crest-line, as through this the man is divided into the left and right sides. The second diagonal or hanging line, through which the Wrath-cut [is cut], named the Wrath- or otherwise Strike-line. Through the third Athwart- or Middle-line, the Middle-cut is completed. The fourth diagonal upwards line, points the way for the Under-cut, just as it points the way for the Wrath-cut from the other side down from above. So that through the line through which the Wrath-cuts are diagonally cut from above, through this same the Under-cuts are directed upwards. But when you direct your cut before him against your opponent, and he is not ready with a strike to encounter your cut, then you can cut to the body below or above his dusack, irregardless of where the lines point, as will be sufficiently taught after this in the devices.

The first rule, how you shall direct the four cuts from one side, each through its associated line, first half, that is into Long-point, second fully through the line, cut after cut.

Stand with your left foot in front, hold your dusack in Bull, as Figure B shows, then step and cut straight through from above down the vertical line, to the point in which the lines meet with each other. Then you stand with outstretched arm in Long-point, for which see Figure C on the left side. From there lower the front part of your dusack further downwards towards your left side and run off, and at the same time while your front part sinks downwards, pull your hilt upwards with a hanging blade, around your head to a strike. Meanwhile while you pull up your dusack to another cut, at the same time also pull your back foot forwards, up to the forward right, so that you have a full step to again with your right foot for your pulled cut. Then cut again as before, through the vertical line. From there, urge yourself again to cut further, but always as before, and so drive a cut forwards three or four times. As many cuts as you cut forwards, so many cuts and steps you shall also again cut backwards. But as in the previous forwards⁹ cutting, you pulled the back foot forwards to the front foot (so that you could step to further with the front), now when in cutting you want to step backwards you must, while you pull up to the strike retreat back with the front to the back, and as before you stepped with the right foot to the strike, now in cutting you must step back with the hind and left foot. Similarly to how until now you have cut the Upper-cut through the vertical line to the point, thus and in this way you will also complete the other cuts through their associated line.

Namely the Wrath-cut through the diagonal hanging line. The Middle-cut through the [line] across. And the Under-cut through the upwards rising line, and that always no further than to the middle with the point horizontal. From there let it run off again towards your left side, and with pulling upwards recover your hilt, to another similar cut. These cuts will serve you to this end that you learn to stop all your cuts (before they are fully completed) halfway through, and to turn them into a

9. The German text reads *übersich*, i.e. “upwards”, but based on context, “forwards” (*fürsich*) was likely intended.

displacement, with which you can receive your opponent's cuts in full run with similar cuts. Secondly, you will cut fully through the line intended above. Thus arrange yourself to stand with the dusack, and then cut through the vertical line with outstretched arm, completely through, and turn your right side well after the cut, towards your left side, so that in such a cut your dusack runs back past next to your left side. But while your dusack runs back through next to your left side, then in the meantime pull your hilt next to your left side upwards around the head, until in the Watch to strike again, thus you stand as the image in Figure B.

The third rule, of the beginning of the deceiving, and how you shall pull away (*abzucken*) the cut, and exchange into another.

After you have arranged yourself in a stance before the man according to opportunity, then step and cut with outstretched arm, and the long edge, from above to the head following the instruction of the vertical line, and meanwhile note if he wants to encounter your cut with a displacement. As soon as you see this, then do not let your cut be touched, or meet his displacement, but nimbly pull your cut away back again before it hits upon his displacement. And cut next to your left side from below through precisely the same vertical line, though with strength violently upwards, as the image in Figure D on the right side demonstrates.

Example with six cuts.

Step and cut the first from your right side, a Wrath-cut against his left side, and through the hanging line, which is indicated with the capitals B. and E. Cut the second from your left against his right, through the middle line across. Cut the third from your right side against his left side, through the upwards rising line, strongly through with an upwards Under-cut, so that at the end of the cut your dusack hangs down behind your left shoulder. From there further cut another Under-cut, violently diagonally upwards through his right side. Then fifth cut a Middle-cut from your right side against his left side, through his Line across. But as the sixth, cut straight from above along the Crest-line to the head.

The Plunge-cut is undertaken from the Upper- and Wrath-cut.

Cut an Upper-cut, along with a step, from your right side back through next to your left side, so that your dusack shoots around again over your head or plunges over, so that at the end of the plunging over, the front point stands towards the man's face again, not unlike the left Bull.

Crooked-cut.

Grip around your grip on the dusack well, so that the curved edge goes in front and hits in cutting, and then cut from above or below with the curved edge according to opportunity.

Shorten-cut.

The Shorten-cut is timely passing through shortly under his weapon. As you have been taught about with the sword.

Constrainer-cut.

When you stand in the Middle-ward on the left side, and then cut away your counterpart's cuts before you with the long edge, of this the Middle-ward consists.

Roarer-cut.

Observe how you drive the man up high with his displacement. Meanwhile, grip around your grip, so that you have your dusack bent. Then pull your hilt around your head with hanging dusack, and cut from below next to your right side, across with the curved edge, with a step out of your right foot, towards his right side.

Waker-cut.

Drive the Waker-cut thus in the onset. If he goes up, then cut upwards through his arm with the curved edge, as you can see in Figure P.

Outrage-cut.

While he pulls his dusack in the air to the strike, meanwhile nimbly pull around your head as well, and cut across a little from below upwards against his cut, so that you catch his cut still above in the air with the long edge and the dusack across, so that your dusack stands across between you and him, as the large image in Figure G. on the right side demonstrates.

How you shall cut after from the Bull.

This cut must be performed, while he pulls up to cut, so that your dusack comes to your left shoulder, and then cut two strikes long after, through the cross, as in Figure I.

A device, how you shall cut someone who quickly cuts after through the weak of his dusack (to incite him).

Step and cut the first anew from your right side from the Bull, against his left side through the weak of his dusack. He will want to quickly cut after this cut, thinking to outspeed you. Therefore, nimbly pull your hilt upwards around your head after the first strike, and cut the second also from your right side, through across against his cut, to which you have thus provoked and incited him with your first through-cut, so that you could catch the same (while he was still flying up), as recorded in Figure G.

How you shall incite someone with gestures along with cuts, so that you can better injure his radial bone with the curved edge.

Now step and direct a violent Upper-cut, from that note dilligently, as soon as he goes upwards to displace, then pull away your cut nimbly towards your left side again around your head, and in this pulling away grip around your grip even more so that, when you from there want to cut, the curved edge goes forth in hitting, and thus cut (when he has gone up, to receive your cut) from your right side underneath his dusack, on the inside upwards to his arm, through towards his left, as you can notice on the image in the set Figure I on the right side.

Of the Wrath-ward.

The image on the right hand in Figure M. teaches you how you shall place yourself in this ward. From this guard you shall then turn away from you all strikes that are cut at you and that are after-cut, and cut after.

Bull and Wrath-ward on the left side.

The image on the right hand in Figure L. teaches you how you will place yourself in the left Wrath-. But of the left Bull, remember how before you have put this to work on the right side, thus you shall also prepare this on the left side.

The first device from the left Wrath-ward.

When in the onset you come in the left Wrath-, then drive strongly together from your left side from above, and from your right side from below, over your forward right leg through his face, following the instruction of the diagonal hanging line, which is indicated with the two capitals H. and B., one cut three or four, until you see opening. Cut in to this, afterwards nimbly cut after long through the cross again, with which you further protect yourself from his cuts.

Counter to the Bull, and the Wrath- on the left.

If in the onset you see and become aware that your opponent encounters you in one of the mentioned left side high guards, then quickly place yourself in the ward of right Bull. From there

thrust him towards his face with a wide step to of your right [foot]. He must parry this, and strike out your thrust. Then let this go around your head to the side to which he has turned this away from you with this striking out, and then cut him towards the other side to the opening. But if you become aware that he also wants to clear away and displace this from you, then let your dusack run off missing past before the same side, and cut him to the other side.

The straight displacement or the slice.

Stand with your right foot in front, and hold your dusack in front with outstretched arm, so that the long edge stands towards the man, and the front point forwards, as the large image on the right hand side in Figure F. shows.

Set yourself in this ward, which is the displacement from below, as the image on the left side in Figure N. shows.

How you shall cut someone to the radial bone while he wants to draw up to the strike.

If you find your counterpart in the Bow, then place yourself also thus, and take heed. As soon as he pulls up to strike, then while he pulls up cut him with a Middle-cut through on the inside towards his radial bone, as you [see] this in Figure P. You can also [do] as treated in the guards, it is unnecessary to report on this, as the Figures I. and K. demonstrate of this.

Of the Boar.

When your counterpart fences at you from above, then you shall fence against him from below. The ward of Boar is only used in the right side, in the way as shown in the Figure indicated with the capital M.

Of the Middle-ward, how and what you will fence from that.

For this place yourself, as the image in Figure M. towards the right hand side shows. From this ward, you can also fence all devices that were taught in the left Wrath- and Bull. Because of this, I only also want to tell you some devices in the briefest, from which you will learn enough of the use of these wards.

Of the Change and its devices.

In this guard place yourself thus, stand with your right foot in front, hold your dusack out with outstretched arm next to you at your side, with the punt to the ground, so that the half edge stands towards the man, as the image on the right hand side in Figure N. teaches. It is called Change because of this, that you come into this guard through the Change-cuts, and it goes to both sides.

Counter against the Change on the left.

When in the onset you find someone in Change, then as soon as you can reach him cut from your left shoulder diagonally through his face, following the instruction recorded in the line H. and D., so that at the end of the cut you come with your point to the ground next to your right side. Then turn your dusack and cut in one move from below, through his arm while he goes up, through under his dusack with strength, so that your dusack comes to your left shoulder again. Then cut an Under-cut across through his face, so that at the end of this cut your weapon comes to the right shoulder to strike. Cut long after from that shoulder with a cross.

Ending of the dusack.

The Artful Fencer

Or
The well-practiced and famous
Fencing Master of Old

THEODORI VEROLINI.

Short though clear description and demonstration
Of the
Free Knightly and Noble

Art of Fencing
With rappier, dussack and sword

From which then
Along with the attached

Art of Grappling

Can be learned how in all kinds of occurring situations, with various usual weapons,
the favourable student can be trained to agility, and can encounter his opponent
dexterously.

Illustrated in more than 130 displayed Figures
And divided into four parts.

Third part.

Würtzburg,
by Joann Bencard, Bookseller
1679.

Content and clear account of the third part Of fencing with the rapier, and also in which order this fencing is described.

When in fencing with rapier or otherwise you want to have something to put in, then step to him with outstretched straight and strong displacement, and simply observe what he wants to fence at you, and from which side he wants to cut or thrust. From which side he now directs his cut, and receive and displace him his cut, and cut or thrust in at him simply to the side from which he has directed his cut, and this before he has fully completed his, or at least has recovered himself again from that. You also have three lanes towards each of his sides, through which you can direct your cut towards him. One from above, the second across, the third from below, and each of these is also displaced or changed three times high or low, as you have been taught in the first Part.

But if he neither wants to cut nor thrust first, but encounters you in the same displacement, and wants to wait for your attack, then you will once more take heed of the three lanes on both sides, and notice towards which will be the most fit for you to cut safely. Many practices belong to this before-cutting, as you have to readily consider that you cannot either cut or thrust anything without having to give yourself open after that. He has arranged himself in such a displacement for this reason, so that where you will let yourself be noticed or give yourself open with one cut, he can next enter to your opening. Therefore, if you want to go before him in thrusting or cutting, you must prepare the first cut more to provoke and enrage, than to hit, so that, when he will cut to your opening, which you have shown with such a cut, you are prepared to strike out and to take that, and only then (after you have weakened and opened him) thirdly to hasten to the opening completely.

To this also come the three cuts, that one shall rightfully hold for a masterly proof, which three cuts are held in high esteem by the ancients as afterwards the five have arisen from them, which are not to be understood as that no greater number shall be cut, but more that all cuts can be divided in these three variations. Namely that some are used to provoke the man from his advantage, the others to displace and with the same to turn away the opponent's cut, and some are used to hit, mainly to injure the body. And here it is not certain whether for each one of these you use one or two or even more cuts, as it also applies likewise with whatever cuts this is accomplished.

Therefore here you must have some attention for the attribute of people, which in this Art of Fencing can typically be divided in four parts, and that after diligent attention you can also find four kinds of fencers. But so that you can have a useful guidance to think, I first want to describe them to you, and afterwards give and compose you a short advice and rule how you shall hold yourself against every one of them.

And the first are those who, as soon as they can reach the man in the onset, next cut in and thrust with impetuousness. The second are somewhat more modest, and do not attack too roughly, but when one has out-cut himself, fallen or else failed in changing through, they travel after and follow hastily to the nearest given opening. The third do not cut to an opening before they do not only have it with certainty, but also take heed whether they can, from that

striking to of the cut, also safely reach into a displacement or to a weapon-strike again, which I also hold for the greatest, though depending on how my opponent is. The fourth prepare themselves in a ward, and so wait for the man's devices. They are either fools or even disdainful, as he who wants to wait for another's device, must be skillful as well as proficient and experienced, otherwise he will not do much.

Then, as now the first are impetuous and somewhat dumb, and, as they say, mad, the second wily and derisive, the third careful and deceitful, and the fourth just foolish, thus you must also assume and make yourself skillful in all four of them, so that you can beguile the man somewhat with impetuousness, somewhat with wiles, somewhat with careful attention, or even incite him with foolish gestures, deceive him and thus not only beguile him at his intended device, but also clear and make place for yourself to the opening, with which you can the more certain touch and hit him there.

Now, against the first fencer, prepare yourself thus. When you notice that in the attack one wants to rush you and overwhelm you with hard cuts or thrusts, then displace him his cut or thrust with

outstretched arm, on your long edge, close to your hilt in the strong, and turn him your hilt against all of his cuts and thrusts flitting so, though so that in this displacing you do not drive too wide out from the Long-point, from your face to the side. Because, in this averting the straighter you remain with your hilt in front of your face, the better it is, and always draw away your head and face from his blade behind yours, and while you halt him his cuts and thrusts, then notice diligently whether you can withdraw the displacement in the second, third or fourth cut, with a step back, so that he misses with his cut or thrust, and then nimbly thrust or cut after just while he is still fallen, or before he recovers again. Then you shall always encounter those who impetuously storm in at you with cuts and thrusts in Long-point or the straight displacement, and also first give way to him a little and budge, though so that you nevertheless take away and avert all cuts and thrusts from you. And then, when he has become seemingly tired, thoughtless or confident, and you have seen your advantage, then follow after nimbly and carefully. And the more you budge, the more thoughtless he becomes, the easier you can take his advantage, though so that you do not let yourself be forced from your advantage. Then, he who so impetuously cuts from himself, he has soon out-cut himself. But against those who do not fence so impetuously in the before, but nearby take heed of the man's fencing in the before, against them in the onset place yourself in one of the wards, and then change carefully before him from one ward to the other, and present him one opening after the other, though so that the point is always in front of him, certainly as has been said before of the alternating. As soon as he thrusts or cuts at you in the meantime, then fall in him on that with setting aside or suppressing, and quickly hasten into the opened opening.

Against the third fencers practice thus. When you notice that your opponent neither cuts first nor quickly hastens to the opening, unless he certainly has it, then in the onset place yourself in the Side-ward, or in the Change, remain in that for a little while, as if you want to wait for his device, but in the meantime go from the Under-ward upwards again and pretend as if you want to change in the Upper-ward. When you have safely arrived in the Upper-ward, then turn your weapon with haste to the strike, thus hastily cut before he sees it through to the nearest opening, with outstretched arm, with which you again open yourself, which opening he will (as you have presented him this thus by an unforeseen strike) without doubt quickly, hastily cut to. If he does this, then set him aside, and work forth to the opening. If he does not cut, then quickly thrust a strong thrust after your completed cut. This is a swift deceit, that you pretend with gestures as if you first want to go from one guard into the other long before him, and partly also do it, but when you almost arrive with your weapon in the intended Upper-ward, and meanwhile see your opportunity, then before you completely come into the guard, you turn your weapon into a strike.

But as it concerns the fourth Fencer, how to prepare against him, this you find thoroughly in the devices learnt so far. Thus you will now pay attention to your opponent's practice, temper and nature, to recognize his intention through this, so that you know how to encounter each according to the situation. Lastly, you will always diligently have three cuts in mind, so that you provoke with one, take, displace with the second, and hit with the third.

Examples.

When you now fence against your counterpart, and you manfully want to attack him first, then you must cut to his openings such, so that you do not place yourself in danger. Therefore while he stands in his advantage so, rather cut the first diagonally, either through his weapon or body, so that with such a cut you enrage him and work him from his present advantage. As soon as he after that goes up and thrusts forth, then take his incoming cut or thrust away with your second cut, and third nimbly cut or thrust him to the body, before he recovers again from his undertaken strike. If you now want to, or if it is necessary for you, since you have to uncover yourself with your earnest After-cuts, then also plan the two diagonal cuts through the cross, to protect yourself further with them, and to recover again.

But if he cuts first, then take his flitting blade with the first, and where it is necessary, also with the second his second, and when you feel that he is sufficiently weakened, then nimbly after-cut and -thrust him secondly. After that protect yourself thirdly, and recover again with weapon-strikes.

Thus I want to let it rest with this, and conclude it with this following device.

When you come with the earlier directed displacement before the man, who does not want to immediately either cut or thrust, then cut (though such that you always remain with the right foot in front) the first diagonally over the point through his right shoulder, so that with this cut you fall into the right Under-ward, and thus you present your upper body open, which opening he will nimbly hasten to. Strongly strike out this flitting thrust of his from your right side towards your left side, and thirdly also cut from your left side across through his right side a Middle-cut through his face, regardless of whether this is completed with the half edge or the flat. Let your blade drive around the head in this Middle-cut, and cut the fourth again diagonally over the point through his right shoulder. After this, nimbly cut the fifth, also diagonally through his left shoulder, with which cut you come in the left Under-ward. From there, take out violently and strongly upwards through his right side with the half edge, and thrust him after you have swung around your rappier over your head into the right Upper-ward, grimly from above towards his face.

Of the division of the man, and of the weapon, and of their use.

The man is divided into left and right with a vertical line. But the same line is accompanied by two other similar vertical lines, with which both the right and left shoulder are cut through down the sides. Secondly, he is also divided into four parts and distinguished diagonally with three diagonal hanging lines, so that the first line starts above his left shoulder right at the neck, strikes further across the upper part of his breast, and ends under his right arm. The second starts above his left hip, diagonally strikes through his belly, and then ends at the start of his right leg. The third starts in the thick part of his left leg, and ends on the other side at his left knee. And now, opposed to these, you also draw three lines diagonally from the other side, diagonally through the man in the already described manner.

The weapon is not divided differently here, then is also done with the sword.

Of the wards and guard with the rappier.

Of the guards with the rappier there are principally counted five, of which then each one (as it for itself straight before you) is also performed and undertaken on both sides. Of which I will then set the ordering and explain to you how they are named and accomplished, as follows.

Upper-ward together with the *Ochs*.

The Upper-ward is regarded and done in two manners to the side. Namely, once for the thrust. Stand with the right foot in front, hold your hilt high next to your right side stretched out forwards upwards to the side, as the image to the right side in Figure B. shows, so that your forward point, that is the point, stands towards the man's face. This is also the *Ochs*.

Upper-ward to the left side.

Stand with the right foot in front, as next, hold your weapon with the hilt high next to your left side, with the arm stretched out upwards, so that the point once more stands in the man's face against his right side. Thus you properly stand in the Upper-ward of the *Ochs* on the left side.

Under-ward on the right side.

Stand with your right foot in front, hold your weapon with a straight hanging arm next to you outside of your right leg. Let the point, that is the forward point, lie outwards towards the earth in front of you, as this can be seen in the large image in Figure D¹⁰.

Iron-gate.

Stand with the right foot in front as always, hold your weapon with forwards hanging straight arm in front of your right knee, so that the point stands forwards towards the man's face, as the image in Figure C. shows. This is therefore named Iron-gate.

10. The Under-ward is not shown in Figure D.

Upper-cut diagonally.

Direct your cut down diagonally towards his hand, so that you come across his blade. But when he cuts lower to your feet, then also cut with lowered body and hanging blade towards his feet. Thus in meeting together the blades give a cross below, as can be seen in Figure B. From these two Wrath-cuts comes the Cross-cut, namely when you direct two of them from both sides against one another, high or low, as the three crosses in the image in Figure C.¹¹ demonstrate.

Hand-cuts.

The Hand-cut can be completed in many ways, as you will take them away in devices well. But note here that as often as he cuts you to the feet, he must stretch out his hand far from himself. Therefore you can avoid him well with the foot, and simultaneously cut to the hand, as the two images in Figure B. teach you.

On thrusts.

But there are three principal thrusts, from which all the others arise and flow, namely the first from above, the second from below, of which each is performed from both sides. The third goes from your middle straight from you in the Long-point. From these three main thrusts, from those as said I want to set some for you here, from which you will be able to sufficiently understand and learn all other thrusts. But drive the Upper-thrust, which shall be aimed towards the man's face or breast from the right *Ochs*, so. Place yourself in the Upper-ward of the right *Ochs*, of which you have been taught. There, lift your right foot to a step forwards, and at the same time with this lifting of your foot, pull your hilt backwards back to your right shoulder, to rally for a strong thrust. Then thrust to towards his breast with a wide step to of your lifted foot, but precisely when this thrust shall connect, turn the long edge clockwise downwards towards your left side, so that at the end of the thrust, you are with your front knee bent well forwards and the upper body well lowered forwards over that towards the ground after the thrust, and that after completion of the thrust your blade with outstretched arm in cutting down comes long before your foot to the earth. From there drive with the long edge and recovered foot upwards in the right *Ochs*, though as you stood at the beginning. This goes on both sides.

Face-thrust.

First learn to thrust this thus over the hand from your left side. Place yourself in the ward of the left *Ochs*. If after that he thrusts forth towards your right side, to jump well from his thrust towards your right side, and while he thrusts forth, thrust from your left side over his arm with outstretched arm in his face.

Item, place yourself in the ward of the right *Ochs*, and notice as soon as he thrusts forth at you, then step from his thrust with your left foot to your left side, and follow nimbly with your right foot out towards his right side. But at the same time with this step let your blade run off towards your left side, and also let it snap around next to that into the ward of the left *Ochs*. From there while he still thrusts forth, thrust as before over his right arm to the face. Thus you hit as can be seen in the small images in the before printed Figure A.¹² and you stand in Long-point. This same must happen nimbly while [he] thrusts forth.

Throat-thrust.

This thrust is carried out in many ways, of which I want to show you one. Thus, when in the onset you find your counterpart in the Iron-gate, then threaten to thrust him from the left Upper-ward of the *Ochs*, over his right arm towards his face while stepping out outside, though such that you stay high with your hilt. If in the meantime you note that he drives up with his hilt towards his right side, intending to avert or to displace your thrust, then lower your front point downwards next to his right

11. This refers to the fencer indicated with "C" on Figure A.

12. Figure A. does not show this.

shoulder, and drive or change through with the same point under his right arm. Then thrust first straight completely inside of his right arm up from below to the throat, so that in directing your thrust in, the long edge stands downwards and the short upwards, and you have your weapon high in the Long-point after completion of the thrust. This in this way it has been performed right. This must be performed swiftly and unforeseen.

Heart-thrust.

The Heart-thrust can be brought to bear from above, from the middle and below. But from all here notice this way. If someone cuts from his right side, then also cut across from your right side against his weapon. With this cut step well with your right foot through under his blade, towards his right, so that you catch him his strike in the strong of his blade. The closer to his hilt, and the higher in the air this is done, the better it is. But while the blades thus clash together, turn the point inwards towards his left breast (so that the half edge is turned against his long edge), though such that your blade stays on his, and thus thrust in staying on his blade, as the large forms in the Figure indicated with the capital G.¹³ demonstrate. In all this diligently note, if he wants to go off your blade. As soon as you feel this, then turn your long edge against his blade again, thus staying on his blade drive with the slice his blade still forwards towards his body, and in the meantime look where you can set on according to the advantage.

Groin-thrust.

Drive this so. When someone cuts you on the outside to your right leg, knee or foot, then catch him his blade with a Counter-cut, up from your left side. In the meantime, step with your left foot well out towards his right side. As soon as the blades beat together, step further with your right foot forwards to him. At the same time wind the point in upwards under his blade, and thrust him to the groin. Or when at the beginning he thrusts you from below, then step out with your left foot once more towards his right side, and direct him his flitting thrust out from your left towards your right, with a hanging blade. But as soon as your blade touches on his, immediately also step further in with your right foot, and thrust him under his blade to the groin, as before.

Reversed thrust.

How you can see this on the smaller forms in the Figure which is indicated with C. on the left hand side. In this thrust the point must in the first swing be set on with snapping around, otherwise the thrust is too weak.

Flying thrust.

As the image in the Figure that is indicated with A. shows. Pull your weapon in the above-named guard. With this pull your foot also to its previous place again. From there hastily thrust once again with a step to towards him. Nimbly pull your weapon from the thrust together with the foot back again to its place, etc. This drives a thrust or six.

Hanging.

Hanging is such a displacement, that you direct your hilt with forwards outstretched arm above your face, so that your blade hangs downwards aimed towards the ground, and so take away his thrust. Occasionally also strike off with your flat to both sides, as you can see in Figure E.

How you shall displace from above and thrust in under his weapon.

Item, if he cuts or thrusts you from below, or under your weapon to your body, then fall from the above-taught displacement with the long edge down from above on his blade, so that your blade in the displacing hangs downwards to the side, as this displacement has been drawn for you in the Figure with C.

13. This is the first plate indicated with "G" - i.e. plate 4.

An example how you shall thrust in from the Upper-ward at the same time with someone.

In the onset when you come before your man with the straight displacement, but he does not want to let himself be lured or provoked from his advantage, then direct your weapon upwards in the right Upper-ward of the *Ochs*, and so direct it with the point upwards, the arm outstretched forwards towards his face. As soon as he upon that thrusts at you, then sidestep at him with your left foot behind your right, and nimbly also step further to him with the right foot. But in this step turn your long edge towards his incoming thrust, and thrust in from you at the same time with him. Thus you displace and hit with one another, as the image in Figure F. on the left hand side demonstrates.

How you shall take out and fence after someone with the Hanging.

When you have struck him out with a hanging blade, then let your blade also go around your head (while you have stepped out towards his left side), with that then also let your point shoot forwards towards the man's face, in the ward of the left *Ochs*. From there immediately thrust to his face, then cut through crosswise diagonally towards his hilt from both sides, as the large image in Figure G¹⁴. shows on the right side.

Now since up to here it has been sufficiently taught how to sufficiently direct a weapon to one hand alone, I want to also briefly demonstrate you how you shall also use a secondary weapon next to the hand-weapon. Firstly grip your rapier in the right and the dagger in the left hand, and so step to him with both arms outstretched from you, as the present image before this demonstrates this to you.

When you now go towards the man in such displacement, you have the displacement and style or rules to fence, threefold. The first is that you catch or halt all your opponent's cuts and thrusts with your dagger only, either from below or above, against the left or the right side, and in the meantime, as you displace so, also at the same time you thrust to with your weapon under or over your dagger, after you have caught and turned away his dagger.

The second is when you cover and preserve each side with the one weapon, and likewise as before, while you protect yourself with the one, you injure him with the other, as when you keep your right side with your weapon, and keep your left side with your dagger.

The third is, that you displace with both weapons at the same time, or with one come to the help of the second, which three displacements, I treat in the briefest one after the other, and with their examples and devices, after the intended ordering.

Ending of the Rappier.

14. Figure G. does not show this.