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COURTESY OF CASTILLE ARMORY

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Issue #1 | SUMMER 2024



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Letters From the Editors



Hi Folks!

Most of you have probably heard of me or know me, I am the owner of Castille Armory. I have been an active participant with SCA, HEMA, and WMA for three decades and counting.

During my journey, I have watched the world of historical sword-based martial arts grow and diversify into something of an international phenomenon. We have decided to help bring further growth to the community by putting together this unbiased informational publication.

The goal here is to give our community a platform to promote their clubs and events and to offer a source for the latest information, helpful tips, training methods, and concise product reviews. These articles are all contributed by you; our community and we hope you contribute often. Thank you for reading!



Sam Covic
Editor-in-Chief



Fighters-

Welcome to The Quill & Quillon!

This publication is meant to be *your* voice as a community- we welcome any all and opinions, contributions, and volunteers.

I am helping contribute as a way of giving back-

I found the HEMA Community several years back when I stumbled upon The Phoenix Society of Historical Swordsmanship in Phoenix, Arizona.

What I've discovered is an incredibly amazing community of passionate people that are eager to help one another learn and improve.

It's only been within the past year that I've entered my first tournaments and have had the pleasure of meeting so many of you.

And while my expertise is in owning and growing personal training studios and as a fitness business coach, I had the chance to meet Sam last year. I'm proud to now be a part of the Castille Armory team to help out with all the challenges of a growing business so that the ridiculously talented builders have the time and space to do what they do best.

If you see me out an event- come say hello, I'd love to meet you!

Scott Carpenter

Editor-In-Chief

ECHOES OF THE PAST

"A TRIP TO PARIS"

BY: LAMBERTO BERRETTI

Hi, first of all sorry for my bad English, consider that I can be even worse with a sword in my hand! Anyway, let's go straight to the point. I will not talk about a major historical fact, I simply want to tell you about a minor event: the forgotten story of the memorable duel between the Count of Turin and the Prince of Orléans. I leave you with the story.

We are on July 3, 1897 and the French prince Henri d'Orléans, returning from his trip to Abyssinia, publishes (in the newspaper "Le Figaro" an article where he accuses of cowardice the Italian officers defeated at Adua (Ethiopia) by the troops of Menelik II. The fact does not go unnoticed.

The era of duels is now close to its end, but the defense of honor (one's own and that of one's homeland) is still a spark capable of causing major fires.

And the fire flares up: Prince Vittorio Emanuele of Aosta (who is almost the same age as Orléans and equal in royal blood) decides to challenge the French prince to a duel.

The Prince of Orleans has no intention of backing down, so he accepts the challenge and the duel is set for 5 in the morning, on August 15, 1897 in the woods of Vauresson, near Paris. The choice of weapon falls on the sword, the pistol is considered too bourgeois, a weapon suitable for "betrayed husbands" and not for Princes.

The godparents are chosen: they are Count Leontieff and Count Avogadro. All that remains is to wait until August 15th. The night of the 14th is short, as well as all summer nights are.

On the morning of August 15th the sun rises early and it finds the two contenders already on the field, ready to carry out all the tasks and ritual formalities, before crossing blades.

Introductions and checks are made, everything is considered compliant with the rules: the duel may begin. After a few usual moments of study, in the first exchange, Orléans is grazed in the chest by the blade of Aosta: it's only a slight nick, we can continue.

The second assault is more violent, it comes to a melee, with the shards of the swords tied and the faces of the two contenders so close that they can hear each other's breathing. Despite the impetuosity, the assault still ends up in stalemate, the contenders catch their breath preparing for the next clash.

IN THE MEANTIME, IT'S STARTING TO GET HOT. WE ARE IN THE THIRD ROUND AND THE FATE OF THE DUEL SEEKS TO CHANGE: ORLÉANS SURPRISES THE COUNT OF TURIN AND NICKS HIM ON THE RIGHT HAND.

At this point the French godfathers propose to end with a draw: slight wound to the chest versus slight wound to the arm, a solution that ultimately makes everyone happy, even the Italian godfathers take it into consideration.

Prince Vittorio Emanuele of Aosta has got a character that does not like middle ground and the Prince of Orleans is no different: they both ask to continue the fight, we move forward. Demonstrating that a draw is not good for anyone, the duelists throw themselves into the fourth assault with even greater ardor, the blades clash violently and that of the Italian prince breaks: the assault is interrupted.

We have reached the fifth round, it is hot and the two Princes are sweating profusely, the drops of sweat are a danger to the eyes and breathing is starting to become labored.

The guard positions are no longer as careful as at the beginning and Orléans sees a gap in the Italian's defense, despite the fatigue, performs a quick stab, determined to close the issue with a decisive thrust.

Vittorio Emanuele seems surprised by his opponent's action, but with a deadly second half action, parry and response, he pierces the abdomen of the Prince of Orleans, above the groin. A non-fatal wound, but serious enough to end the duel, which lasted 26 minutes. Although wounded, the Prince of Orléans wants to sit down and asks to shake hands with Aosta, who accepts with pleasure and with respect towards his opponent.

A few hours later, Prince Vittorio Emanuele of Aosta takes the train to Turin, as if he were simply returning from a pleasant weekend in Paris.

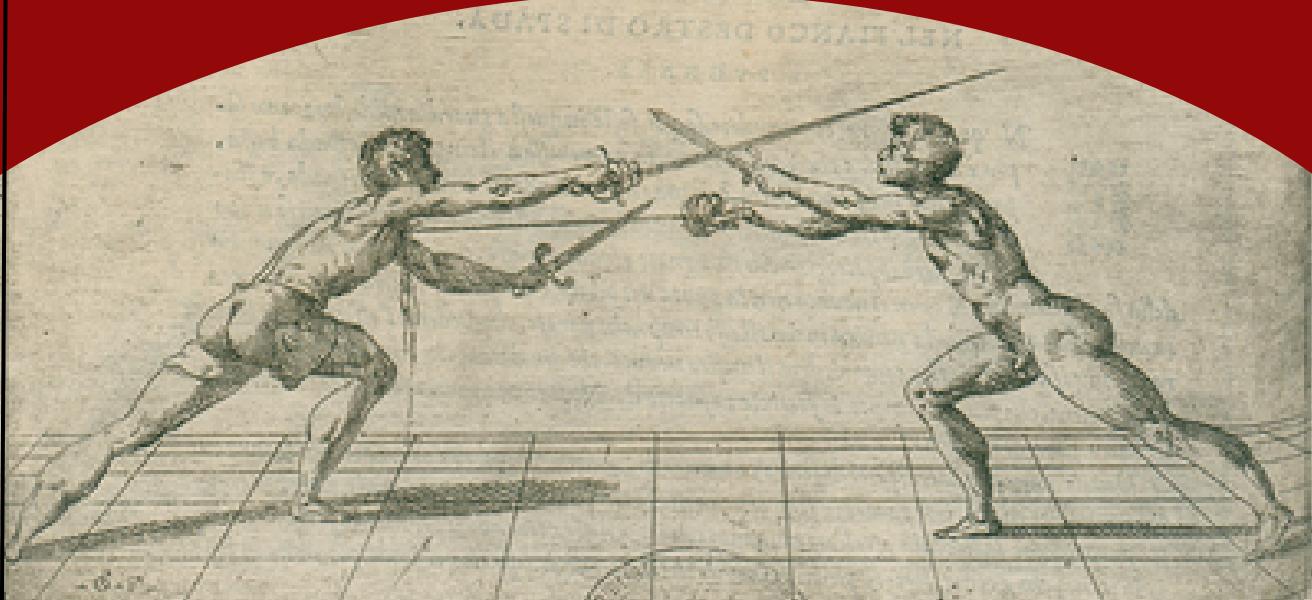
That's all folks! I hope that this modest story of mine, which has no pretense of judging the practice of dueling, simply get you out of everyday life for a few moments, and took you to Paris, on a hot August morning. If I succeeded, even for a little while, I'm happy.

Ciao
Lamberto

Lamberto Berretti

"He loves history and fencing"





THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE FORWARD TARGET IN RAPIER

BY: JBT EMMONS

In most rapier treatises the emphasis is on thrusts to the deep target. This often includes in wonderfully grisly fashion thrusts to the face as well as torso. What one does not see as much is attention to the forward target, that is, the arm, hand, and in some contexts the front leg. 1 Given the near universal focus on drilling the thrust in the sources, and considering the high degree of point-control one develops in such practice, it is easy to wonder why we see so little inclusion of the advanced target in these earlier works.

This is part one of a two-part study that seeks to explore the question

This examination includes a number of challenges. There is the nature of the weapons and their complex hilts. There is what is stated and not stated in the treatises, anecdotal information from accounts of duels, incidental comments that can be illuminating, and what logically follows from technique. The samples covered here suggest that the forward target, while not primary, was an acceptable target should one land a touch there, and in some cases, a favored target should one not wish to kill one's adversary.

RAPIER GUARDS

The complex hilts on rapiers do a fantastic job of protecting one so long as one's positioning and technique are sound. Complex hilts betray an obvious concern for the hand's vulnerability.

Most general histories covering rapier are quick to point out the various bars, cups, and rings that comprise the guard and how these were "improvements" on the cross-guard of the archetypical medieval sword.

One can, and should, argue against any idea of linear progress in the development of hilt design—people have historically been adept when it comes to arming themselves. They use what they need, and given how long the cross-hilt was in use, we should conclude it did the job well for the context in which it was used.

However, changes in warfare, non-military use of weapons (e.g. self-defense), and developments like the duel meant adapting weapons and systems.⁶ The rapier was an excellent response to the needs of anyone fighting one-on-one in civilian contexts. The blade of the average rapier was long and sharp, a first deterrent against adversaries, but should the sharp point not prevent someone from attacking or should an opponent's blade have reached past it, then there was the guard to deflect, block, or trap the incoming steel. It is likely that complex hilts were designed to protect the hand both as target itself and as one reached for deeper target.

Moreover, and important here, the evidence for sword systems predating rapier included the forward target. Surviving sources, from tracts on fighting to myriad images found in medieval art, make this clear. The same can be said for many works from the period of the "Bolognese School." There are references, even cross-overs between these earlier systems and rapier treatises. Pallavicini and Marcelli for example, both cite the Bolognese authors among others for support in their respective works.

Rapier Treatises

Though there are comparatively fewer direct references to the forward target in the rapier corpus, arguing from silence is unwise: the lack of inclusion should not lead us to believe either that these masters eschewed or assumed the extended target.

We are left to infer what we can from what they did include, from what we read in accounts of fights, the nature of the weapons themselves, and the principles behind all swordplay.

Patrick Bratton reminded me that we also must consider the differences in training: even with rebated arms, the mask had not yet been invented and coverings for the hand were limited.

Steel gauntlets were still in use, but would be cumbersome to use with a rapier, so it is far more likely that if students wore gloves, they used those they wore about town or perhaps a pair of stout leather. Training at speed and targeting the hand might have led to injuries harder to repair at the time.

The works examined below make less mention of the forward target than they do chest and head. Even where one might expect it, the masters seem to have preferred one reach for the body. Giuseppe Pallavicini, in discussing why he wants the arm straight on guard explains that it is about ensuring proper measure:

Si che stando in guardia, si deve stare con il braccio lungo, e non si deve tenere il braccio raccolto; perche non si potra mai conoscere la distanza della misura, e tenendosi il braccio lungo innante, sà stare il vostro contrario lontano, e si viene à conoscere la perfeta misura...

Being on guard, you must keep the arm extended, and must not hold the arm bent, because you will not ever be able to know the distance of the measure, and holding the arm extended forward, makes your opponent keep his distance, and you come to know the perfect measure...

The benefit of this extended guard is that it makes it easier to harry the wrist and forearm should the opponent attack out of measure or fail to close the line. Pallavicini adds that so long as one adopts this guard well then one can strike to the opponent's shoulder via a glide in 4th should the latter find one's sword on the inside; in the rest of the chapter his target is the face.

Camillo Agrippa, an earlier master, includes feints made to the forearm, a site presenting less danger to the attacker than a feint to the chest. In his *Tratto di Scientia d'Arme* (1553), Book 2, Chapter 4, for example, Agrippa writes:

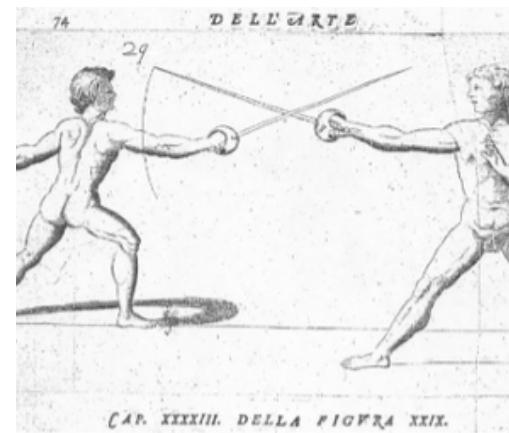
Per quest' alter due figure signate per A. & per D. si dice (immaginandosi che D. habbia fatto una finta al braccio di A. per stimularlo, come habbiamo detto di sopra ragionando de le diffuse & offese di Quarta Guardia) che non movendosi

Suppose in this case that the fencer on guard in D has made a feint at the arm of the fencer on guard in A in order to make him move, as in the discussion of defense and offense of the fourth guard, and that A didn't move. Fencer D can then go into the position of B and, beating the point of A's sword with his left hand...

Returning to Pallavicini, he specifically mentions the arm as target. 14 For example, in Ch. 20, he recommends a mandobolo: Et anco se al venire innanti cauasse la sua Spada per di sotto della vostra Spada, e vi tirasse una Imbroccata nella parte di fora della vostra per colpirui nella spalla destra; all'hore voi alzate la sua Spada con li vostro falso filo, e li tirate una Imbroccata sotto la sua Spada, el lo colpite nel suo fianco destro, con abbassare il corpo, e per andare ben guardato, è di bisogno tirare al vostro contrario un Mandobolo; Il quale hà da colpire nel capo del vostro contrario, anco nel suo braccio destro...

Also, if in coming forward he makes a cavazione under your sword and delivers an imbroccata to your outside in order to strike your right shoulder, you then raise his sword with your false edge,

and strike him with an imbroccata under his sword, hitting him in the right flank, lowering your body. In order to go well guarded, it is necessary to strike your opponent with a mandobolo, which has to strike his head and also his right arm.



Pallavicini. Fencina Illustrated. 1670

In similar vein, Capo Ferro makes specific mention of targeting the hand in Chapter 12 of his *Gran Simulacro dell'Arte e dell'Uso della Scherma/Great Representation of the Art and Use of Fencing* (1610):

Deve sapere che ogni volta che il tuo avversario havrà la punta della sua spada fuor della tua presentia, o alta o bassa o che guardasse fuor delle tue parti sinistre o destre, tu te li metterai incontro alla mano la punta della tua spada in linea retta, col piegare alquanto la vita indietro,

ti accostarai a misura & arrivato che sarai li spingerai una punta di mezzo tempo nella detta mano: col spinger sol

la vita innanzi, piegando il ginocchio destro si ferirà; ma avertirai che in tal ferire devi portare il più sinistro indietro accompagnato col destro & di più havendo il nimico il braccio del pugnale innanzi avanzato, volendolo tu ferire nella mano terrai il medesimo ordine, come di sopra.

You must know that every time that your adversary has the point of his sword outside your presence, either high or low, or that it faces outside your left or right side, you will put the point of your sword opposite his hand in a straight line;

leaning your body somewhat to the rear, you will approach to measure, and, having arrived, you will push a thrust in mezzo tempo into the said hand; just by propelling the body forward and bending the right knee will one strike; but you will take care that in such striking you must carry the left foot back, accompanied by the right; and furthermore, the enemy having his dagger arm advanced forward, you, wanting to strike it in the hand, will follow the same directions as above.

Keeping the point on target-any target-is efficient; one can, via the straight line, attack faster than can someone who must bring the point into line first. Many daggers of the period had little guard, so a logical target would be the off-hand holding the dagger.



"Jim is a coach of historical fencing and historian"



The Many Ways to Hold a Sword

BY: RICHARD MARSDEN

HISTORICALLY, THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO HOLD A SWORD. FROM THE MODERN MIND THIS CAN LEAD TO SOME CONFUSION BECAUSE PEOPLE TODAY TEND TO ARGUE FOR THE MOST OPTIMAL WAY TO HOLD A SWORD. WHAT THE MODERN MIND WANTS AND WHAT HISTORICAL TREATISES PROVIDE IS NOT THE SAME THING.

Footwork, stance and how to hold a sword may seem like key building blocks to any understanding of fencing, but in the past there was less emphasis on this and more emphasis on technique.

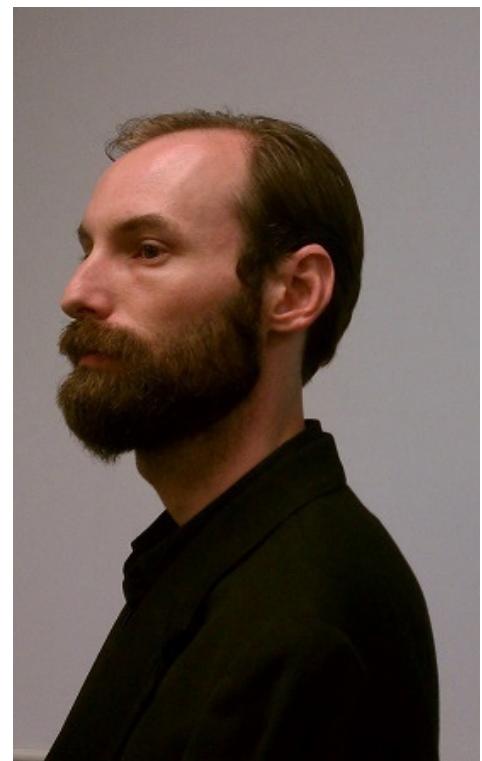
One historical master, Meyer, even apologizes for bringing up footwork which he believed the 'marketplace' teaches one and all.

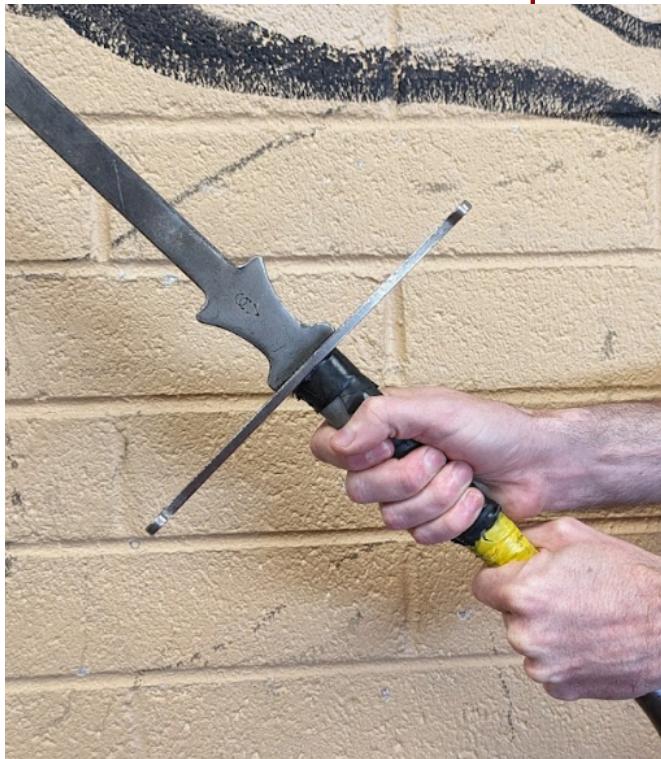
Other masters discuss footwork only to let the reader understand the terms they will use when discussing techniques. Nearly all the old masters entirely dispense with how to hold the sword.

'what this means is that the masters of the past were more open to different ways to hold the sword. Whatever way you are holding a longsword or rapier for example is probably supported by source material.

There was no one-true-way and there was little talk of how exactly to hold the sword. However, examining longsword and rapier treatises from the 1400s to 1600s can reveal much of the many acceptable ways to hold a sword.

For example, Fiore de Liberi's works, the Flower of Battle circa 1410 (4 surviving copies exist) depict numerous ways to hold the longsword.





A simple way to hold the longsword that provides strength and leverage. The hands are not bunched up too close together, nor are they pressed flush against the guard nor are they grasping the pommel. This is a common method of holding the longsword found in many treatises, not just Fiore's.

In this variation the hand grips the pommel. This too is also commonly found in historical treatises and is very common in the Flower of Battle. Some longswords have shorter handles, and you'll have little choice but to grip the pommel anyways.

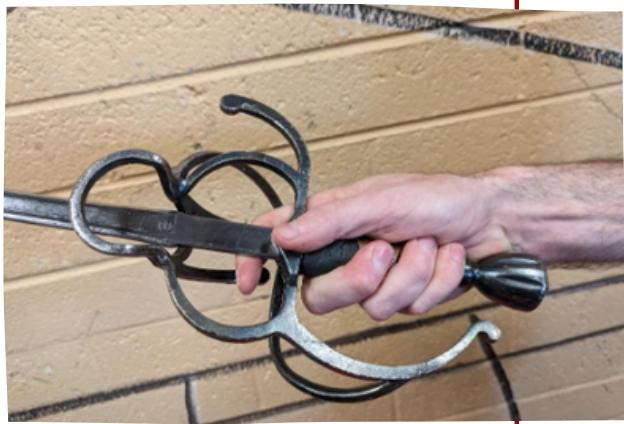


This variation has the thumb along the spine of the sword. German treatises will have the thumb along the flat of the schilt (the flared section of the sword just above the cross-guard). This method provides more control and ability to direct the sword. It is easier to do with a lighter weight sword.

While personally I would never use this method, it too shows up in Fiore's works and like the extended thumb provides more control.

Jumping ahead two hundred years into the 1600s and the rapier masters show how to hold a sword but rarely say much about it. The mainstay works of the early 1600s, such as that of Giganti, Capo Ferro and Fabris, spend no time at all on how to hold a sword. By looking at the imagery and that of other masters, it becomes clear there were many ways to hold a sword.

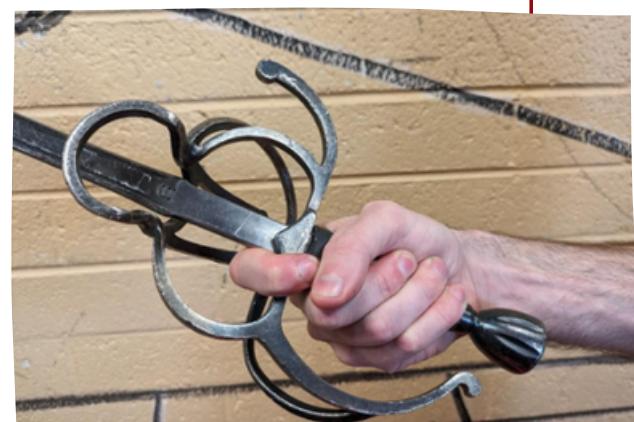
Some of the examples are below and if you peruse various rapier treatises you will recognize them.



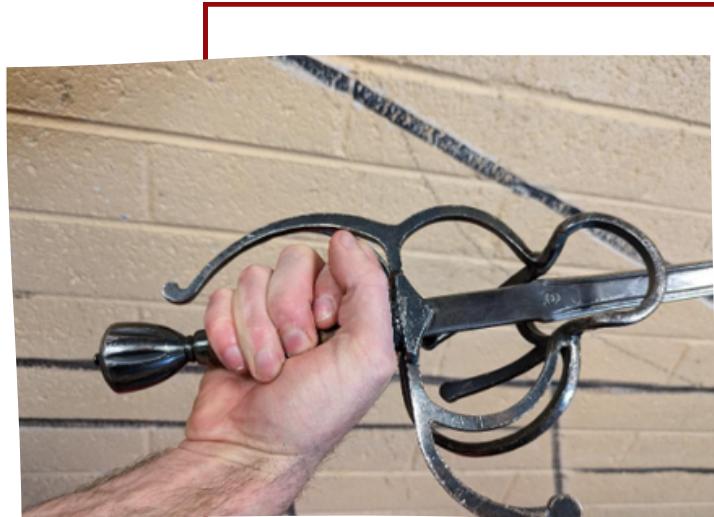
In this method, the index finger and thumb lightly pinch the ricasso. The rapier is held more like a pencil and provides excellent mobility for disengages, though may be straining at first.



The same method, but this time two fingers are used to support the thumb. This may be necessary for heavier blades or to have more strength and control.



This method loops the index finger and brings it close to the thumb. This tighter grip will raise the point of the blade, making it less ideal for the thrust, but provides plenty of strength and control when cutting. It's entirely possible to switch hand positions based on what you are doing.



I'm not one to usually disagree with the old masters. I am never looking for the one-true-way or the most optimal way to fence. I am trying to do things as masters of old did and mold into something effective and functional when sparring. That said, some methods I avoid, and this is one of them. While fantastic for grip, I find it far too difficult to control the sword. Yet, it is from a historical master (Joachim Köppe) and thus one of the many legitimate ways to hold a rapier in the past.

In your own pursuits, I suggest looking closely at source material from the past and trying out different ways to hold the sword, be it longsword, rapier, saber etc.

Books by Richard Marsden:

Bad HEMA - Historical Masters Complaining

<https://www.amazon.com/Bad-Hema-Richard-Marsden/dp/1950626121/ref>

Fiore Getty -

<https://www.amazon.com/Flower-Battle-MS-Ludwig-XVI3/dp/0984771689/ref>

Fiore Latin -

<https://www.amazon.com/Flower-Battle-MS-Latin-11269/dp/0984771638/ref>

HEMA History -

<https://www.amazon.com/Historical-European-Martial-Arts-Context/dp/0984771662/ref>

Polish Saber-

<https://www.amazon.com/Polish-Saber-Richard-Marsden/dp/0984771654/ref>

Richard Marsden



TO THE POINT

BY: SAM KOVIC

vol. 1

What rapier is best for me?

I build swords for HEMA (most recently), SCA, stage combat, and WMA. I've been in the business of making rapiers for sport combat for nearly 3 decades with literally over 25,000 swords sold and in use currently, worldwide. What is interesting is that all of these disciplines have their particular requirements, even if on paper they appear to overlap. This will be an important distinction a little later because while each of these groups falls into similar calibration parameters, HEMA for example, covers the widest spread, from light unarmored touch to full heavy armored contact. Each end of this spectrum requires something different from not only the combatant but the gear being used.

Ultimately, the goal of every historical sport sword maker is to offer a product that meets the flex requirements and safety guidelines set by the association or society to which the end user will be competing, all while offering a comfortable and historically accurate fencing experience.

The materials used are important for quality as are the processes that render the materials "safe" for sparring.

Most mono-steel modern rapiers are made from 5160, 6150, 1095, or other variation of “spring steel” and are heat-treated to a hardness that offers flexibility and toughness. The hardware is often made of alloy steel although softer mild steel is sometimes used because it is more easily formed. In your search for the perfect rapier, investigate the quality of materials used if they are not overtly divulged. The difference between mild steel and alloy steels could make the difference between quillons that stand up to hard cuts or bend in a stuffed gear bag.

Overall weight and balance are important for more than just handling. Depending on what specific manuals you or your club are looking into, details like blade length, weight, balance, and even whether the rapier guard has straight or curved quillons and a knuckle bow make a big difference in how effective the rapier will be using those strategies. I always recommend that a rapier practitioner pay attention to the requirements of the system that one seeks to learn when choosing the right rapier. I also recommend that folks new to rapier be weary of heavier rapiers, anything over 1100 grams or thereabout because fatigue as well as wrist, shoulder, and elbow injuries can occur easier than one may expect. Any rapier practitioner with experience will tell you that there is a significant amount of conditioning that goes into being able to wield a heavy rapier for any length of time.

I often get customers asking what I would recommend for their personal strategy. By asking a few questions I can usually put customers into three categories. 1. Those new to rapier, 2. Those changing up their game and 3. Those who have new requirements. The last category sometimes involves an injury, or some newly acquired physical limitation.

For folks trying out rapier combat for the first time who don’t know where to start, economy models are in my opinion, the go-to. Several of the big makers offer economy models that are less expensive and usually have options that cover a wide array of historical systems and styles. These “generic” light rapiers usually consist of simple clamshell guard designs for good hand protection and have straight quillons. Blade lengths are offered between 40 and 42 inches long (100cm to 108cm) and the overall weight is usually on the lighter side of 800 to 1000 grams; historically common in Spanish traditions. These economical offerings are also simply a good choice because if you decide that rapier is not for you, you’re not out as much money and they are easily resold.

What is great about modern rapiers is that most manufacturers make blades, guards, grips, and pommels that are interchangeable and modular so your gear can evolve with your game. I still recommend that you ask the manufacturer if the parts are interchangeable just in case. Shipping can be nearly as expensive as the parts themselves.

Finally, think a bit about your future. Will you branch out into SCA or WMA if you are starting with a HEMA club? Or vice-versa. What are their requirements and does your current rapier meet them? Some tournaments put blade length caps or minimums upon entry. Do your due diligence and if you have the chance, hold and use other people's rapiers if they will let you because I guarantee you that at some point along your rapier journey, you will pick up the "one" and it will change your game. I have always said the perfect rapier will choose you, not the other way around.

U.S. domestic manufactures include:

Castille Armory- www.castillearmory.com

Darkwood Armory- www.darkwoodarmory.com

Purple Heart Armory- www.woodenswords.com

Alchem Inc. www.alcheminc.com

Jesse Belsky Stageswords- www.jesse-belsky-stageswords.squarespace.com

SGT Blades- www.sgtblades.com

Seven Embers Forge- www.sevenmembersforge.com

Arms and Armor- www.arms-n-armor.com

Foreign manufacturers include:

Sigi Forge- www.sigiforge.com HF Armory- www.hfarmory.com

Hanwei- www.kultofathena.com, www.casiberia.com

Bellatore- www.bellatore.red

Fabri Armorum- www.fabri-armorum.com



**Castille Armory, Inc., MOD, Hema Gold
Medalist, 5th Rank Black Tiger.**



The Making Of A Scabbard

BY: ALEXANDER LESLIE

WITH PATIENCE, PRACTICE, AND DEDICATION, CRAFTING CUSTOM SCABBARDS BECOMES A REWARDING ENDEAVOR FOR SWORD ENTHUSIASTS SEEKING THE PERFECT BLEND OF FORM AND FUNCTION.

Transportation, protection, and display are paramount concerns within the fencing and sword-collecting communities, where enthusiasts seek optimal solutions for safeguarding their prized blades.

While a variety of options exist on the market, each comes with its own set of compromises and considerations

PVC sheaths offer practical protection but often lack aesthetic appeal, even when wrapped. Leather sheaths, while offering a traditional and stylish option, can be prohibitively expensive and may not provide sufficient rigidity for optimal blade protection. Golf club hard cases represent a reasonable compromise for housing multiple blades, yet aficionados still seek internal structure and padding for added security.

Alternatively, Pelican-style cases excel in providing superior protection and transportation capabilities but come at a premium cost and limit the number of blades accommodated per case.

In light of these considerations, the author advocates for wood-core scabbards as the ultimate solution.



These meticulously crafted scabbards offer a blend of durability, rigidity, and aesthetic appeal, making them ideal for enthusiasts seeking both practicality and style. A well-crafted scabbard not only ensures the safety of the blade and user but also enhances the overall experience of reenactments or tournament fencing bouts.

Constructing a wood-core scabbard involves a meticulous process, starting with the careful selection of materials such as low-tannin woods like poplar and quality leather for wrapping. Basic construction necessitates a range of tools, including a table saw, sharp knives, sandpaper, and leatherworking implements.

The construction process entails profiling the wood, carving a snug pocket for the blade, and meticulously contouring the exterior for a seamless finish. Leather is then expertly shaped, stitched, and fitted over the scabbard, with additional embellishments such as dyeing, painting, or gilding added for personalized aesthetics.

Attention to detail, safety precautions, and craftsmanship are emphasized throughout the construction process, ensuring that enthusiasts can create bespoke scabbards that effectively protect and showcase their treasured sword collections.

With patience, practice, and dedication, crafting custom scabbards becomes a rewarding endeavor for sword enthusiasts seeking the perfect blend of form and function.

Alexander Leslie

Alex Leslie (James MacGowan in the SCA) has been a blacksmith/bladesmith since 2010, and is a lifelong sword and fencing enthusiast.



Sword Spotlight



First time making it into elims, proudly sporting a custom Castille rapier! CombatCon 2023.

NICK HERNANDEZ



Small group of us that have been meeting up for a few years now. We live in the Orlando, Florida. USA. Probably 6 Castille pieces among us so far.

STEPHEN CHOQUETTE



Hunting sword Hirschfänger (Deer Catcher) of the late 16th century and Boar hunting sword, A hunting sword based on those carried in The Triumph of Maximilian I from the beginning of the 16th century.

NICHOLAS SHOMENTA

SWORD LORE

Blood Groove...you mean fuller?

In the world of swords and sword enthusiasm, context and assumption are often a “point” of contention. See what I did there? Swords and their rich history are as substantial a part of the human cultural landscape now as they were when they were the tools that put kings on thrones and decided where one country ended, and another began. Even though the sword is now only relegated to ceremonial purposes in the age of modern warfare, it is still a symbol of war. It is also a symbol of justice, commonwealth, strength, and even peace. Swords offer the imagination some sort of old-world romance. The simplicity of looking one's adversary in the eye when in defense of one's honor and the belief that a deity would somehow guide the blade to a swift and legitimate completion of duty.

What sets the sword apart from just about any other obsolete yet iconic object from humanity's past is that it is also a pop culture icon. From Light Sabres to cocktail drink accessories the sword is part of our daily lives, symbolically speaking.

Now, let's open the door for the academic sword crowd. A group that in recent times is growing, learning... and arguing about the semantics of these iconic objects. These swordly scholars are studying and translating old manuals, practicing the historical physical artform, and to some extent, re-writing what hundreds of years of atrophy have done to the actual informative parts of swordology. The day that the sword was simply remembered as a symbol of knightly virtue or swashbuckling courage, it was forgotten as the deadly weapon to which it was intended. These folks and the modern sword community is working to bring this angle back.

The greatest growing pain for this movement is re-molding society's mind to look at the sword for what is actually was and not the Hollywood magical fantasy accouterment it has become, only adorning old world armored heroes, wizards, fairy tale creatures and the dread pirate Roberts.

I remember having a conversation with a customer years ago who discredited me as a sword builder because he insisted the fuller of a sword is called a “blood groove” and that it was historically called as such. (The fuller is a trough-like groove down the center or back of each side of the blade). He went on to tell me “It was engineered in swords of old because it kept your blade from getting stuck in your opponent after running them through, because of suction”. This is, of course, not true at all. After all, what would keep your chopsticks from getting stuck in a savory dumpling or your Thanksgiving carving knife from getting stuck in the turkey from the suction, for neither of those comes with a “blood groove”. The true purpose of a fuller is simply to reduce or redistribute the weight of the blade without changing the rigidity of the blade. Simple medieval engineering. More to the point- many historical blades don't even have a fuller so by this customers logic these swords would have need to be left with the deceased.

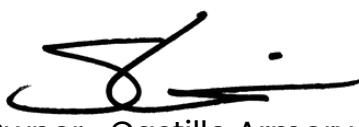
In my lifelong pursuit of studying the sword, I've heard all kinds of wacky and completely disprovable things from people. Factoids that they either truly believed or were making a bold attempt to troll me with. To wit, many years ago at a pirate-themed ren fair I regularly attended in the

Willamette Valley, Oregon called "Sea Dog Nights", A gentleman with a cheap pawn shop katana strapped to his back approached my merchant booth. He says in complete confidence to me, and I quote. "Most people don't know this, but the katana is actually a Scottish sword. The Chinese visited Scotland in the 1500's and brought it back and made it their favorite sword, so they basically copied it". To which I just nodded and replied something to the effect of "interesting...". For most everyone reading this article, the holes in this fellow's knowledge of the katana are quite obvious. But for many non-sword nerds, this could be probable and with enough persuasion one might run with it. Now, in case you are not a sword nerd and are looking for corrections to this re accounted transgression, the Katana is a Japanese Sword going back much further than the 1500's and no, it is not Scottish in any way, shape or form. This mistaken assumption may have come from watching the movie "Highlander". In any case if this guy really believed this to be true, it presents another fine case of sword misinformation with its roots based firmly in Hollywood fantasy.

Here is another account of sword lore being vetted and corrected, just in a more benign fashion. Recently, I was asked to make a sword for a customer they referred to as a "Germanic Cherusker sword". This was something I had never heard of. Sort of a machete-like chopper with a unique grip shaped something like the Swords that Leonitus and his soldiers of Sparta used. If you've ever watched the movie "300", you'd recognize this. The customer had several photos and some links to a legitimate on-line museum study of the thing. I built the sword as requested and posted pictures on my Facebook page with the title "Germanic Cherusker Sword". To my benefit, a few of my followers chimed in, a discussion ensued, and we were able to learn more about this sword in historical terms. It turns out that the "Cherusker" part was not a typology of sword but more, a descriptor of the German class of working folk that used them back in the day. Sure, this is not a significant bit of information, but it does make a difference in the overall academic hive mind.

There are plenty of misinterpretations that exist these days when routing through the syntax of the regionality of swords, slang names, and even when they were first used. Archeologists are constantly digging up swords that don't exactly fit the model scientific classification and nomenclature. I read somewhere that recently a Viking-era burial was exhumed and to the astonishment of all, a Byzantine-style sabre was found beside the skeleton. The radiocarbon dating put the sword cotemporary to the burial and the steel was sourced locally but it was not your classic Viking design, not even close. So, here is an anomaly that given the right venue would completely change what we know as the quintessential Viking sword. Imagine if this was the first sword scientifically classified as a "Viking" sword. What we know of Hollywood portrayals of the Vikings and modern literature would be quite different.

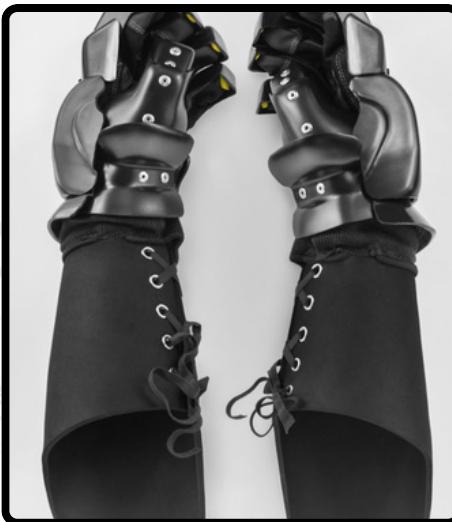
We are still learning about so many forgotten aspects about these ancient weapons that only time will tell how we perceive them in the future.



Owner- Castille Armory, Inc.

EQUIPMENT SPOTLIGHT

This is my Sparring Gloves Infinity Gloves long term review. I got them about 2 years ago and they're still my go to for everything except rapier and smallsword. Dexterity is great while retaining most of the protection of a lobster glove.



From the editor- you can find your nearest distributor from Sparring Glove's website here: <https://sparringglove.com/en/distributors/>



All in all they've held up better than I expected, especially the styrogel hourglass cuffs. As expected, the right one takes a lot more hits but has held up very well as you can see from the pictures.

I wear a silk glove under these to prevent hotspots or blisters. In between uses I put Meister Glove Deodorizers in them to absorb sweat and odors without making the leather too hard.

I've made the following modifications to mine to help with protection and make up for design defects.

As you can see from the photos I've wrapped each finger in athletic tape just above the first knuckle of my finger. This helps prevent ripping the underglove at that point since there's no attachment to the outer shell there. It also keeps the fingers from rotating and crushing my fingers - this is the biggest design flaw, but it's easily rectified.

I've also completely enclosed the right forefinger since a sword tip can get under there and ouch! When they first arrived I backed out each nut about 3 turns and applied thread lock, and then tightened them down again. I've only ever lost and I found it after. Are they perfect? No. Are they good? Hell yes! I like them more than any other gloves I've ever tried!

Owner- Castille Armory, Inc.

20
24

UPCOMING HEMA TOURNAMENTS

11
May

SpringSteel 2024

United States (Carlsbad, California)

18
May

Battle Born 2024

United States (Carson City, Nevada)

01
June

Unicorn Fight Club 2024

New Zealand (Christchurch, Canterbury)

07
June

Black Horns Cup 2024

Poland (Kórnik, Wielkopolska)

22
June

Green Chapel 2024

United States (Bellevue, Nebraska)

22
June

Hot Sword Summer 2024

United States (Alachua, Florida)

06

July

Maestros de la guerra 2024

Peru (Lima, Lima)

19

July

Queen's Gambit 2024

United States (Charlotte, North Carolina)

20

July

Steel & Chill 2024

Croatia (Daruvar, Bjelovarsko-bilogorska)

13

September

AG Open 2024

United States (Plymouth, Michigan)

14

September

Edgebana 2024

United Kingdom (Dundee, Scotland)

11

October

Fight Camp 2024

United States (Greenland, Indiana)

12

October

Einherjar Cup 2024

China (Hong Kong,)

02

Nov

Berlin Duelling Days 2024

Germany (Berlin, Berlin)

16

Nov

MERCS Malta Longsword Open 2024

Malta (Birkirkara,)

30

December

Boston HEMA League 2024

United States (Boston, Massachusetts)

*For tournament details and results, visit :
<http://hemascorecard.com> OR scan here*



THE CLUB SPOTLIGHT



ACADEMY OF ARMS: BURBANK

What type of club are you?
HEMA

Club name
Academy of Arms: Burbank

Club location (city, state, country)
Burbank, CA USA

Who are the club founders?
Shay Roberts

When was the club founded?
2009

What disciplines do you teach or specialize in?
Longsword, messer, dagger, sword&buckler, rapier, ringen, among others

What brought you into the HEMA/SCA world?
Friend asked if I wanted to learn historical fencing

ACADEMY OF ARMS: BURBANK



What do you love most about HEMA/SCA?

Learning the techniques of the various weapons

What do you love most about your club?

Our sense of community

Where can people find you?

Academyofarms.com

PHOENIX SOCIETY OF HISTORICAL SWORDSMANSHIP



When was the club founded?

Around 2009. All things have humble beginnings and ours was in a carport with just the two of us, Richard Marsden (myself) and John Patterson.

What disciplines do you specialize in?

Longsword and the master Fiore, rapier and the master Giganti. However, over the years we have expanded and our students have expanded pursuing other weapon systems and masters, such as John and I's exploration of Polish saber, and the students' exploration of Meyer, Fabris, Vadi, Capo Ferro and much more. Thanks to our sub-leases we have also seen and dabbled with Japanese arts and even lightsaber!



What brought you into the hema/sca world?

For myself, it was training with the Adrian Empire, a re-creation group, and then the Loyal Order of the Sword under Greg Hinchcliff, a historical fencing group. I started my involvement at the age of 15 and at this point have roughly 30 years of experience. I eventually created my own club alongside John Patterson. For John, he met me and the line, "Do you like swords" was all it took. Even as a child he had an interest in swords! John's organizational abilities and ambition took the club from, well, two of us, to now, a building and many of us.

What do you love most about hema/sca

The history mixed with physical activity, as well as seeing our students learn, grow and develop. Many of our students have improved overall by joining with us and our club has provided an anchor to their lives.

What do you love most about your club?

The students are who we love the most because our club is for them. John and I are not paid, nor are our volunteer instructors. We are a non-profit in the truest sense of the word and trying to provide a service, while at the same time running a functional club. While very challenging, the reward can be well worth it.

Where can people find you?

PhoenixSwordClub.Com

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COMMUNITY POLL

In every issue, we're going to ask one burning question to the entire fencing community.

Take a minute and give us your thoughts...

The final poll will be revealed in the next issue!

Question of the Quarter:

What is one discipline you would love to learn more about?

Give us your answer here:

<https://0xaaeo2ksam.typeform.com/to/oFEHQbHW>



HOW TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE TO BE FEATURED IN OUR MAGAZINE:



<https://forms.gle/CSJF4CKCjcPqCHG06>

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR HEMA/SCA CLUB TO BE FEATURED IN OUR MAGAZINE:



<https://forms.gle/TnRqKCbUw74vyhBh8>

HOW TO SUBMIT PHOTOS TO BE FEATURED IN OUR MAGAZINE:



<https://forms.gle/wCUoLg6SnWRabZbf7>

HOW TO SUBMIT HEMA/SCA/OTHER EVENT/TOURNAMENT:



<https://forms.gle/FusWQFgaKm6wDPY8A>

Organizations



HEMA

<https://www.hemaalliance.com/>

SCA

<https://www.sca.org/resources/martial-activities/>

BOTN

<https://botn.info/>

USA FENCING

<https://www.usafencing.org/>

ECS

<https://www.ecs-imperial.org/>

HMBI / BUHURT

<https://hmbia.info/>

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castillearmory.com

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2024

*Summer
Edition!*



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