

Giovanni dall'Agocchie
Opera Necessaria

Copyright 2003 - William E. Wilson

This is a work in progress. Dall'Agocchie is a master in the Bolognese tradition from the Dardi school. His work is a transitional piece that is shifting from a more cut oriented play to an emphasis on the thrust. As I find time to translate I will continue to add to this work.

The book is written as a dialog between Messer Lepido and Messer Giovanni (the master). My comments will be in italics. Page numbers will be given where major sections begin.

This work may not be used in any publication without the prior approval of the translator. Some text may still be in the original Italian as the translator works on it.

Page 7

Gio: By this time we are a lot ahead. I do not want to remain to say all my opinion to you around this. You know that all the art consists liberally of Theory, and practice. The same is still this, and for the Theory and for the practice one must give consideration. The Theory of the art of fence teaches with reason the manner of defense and offense. The practice is that which one acquires through habitual work, that is, with long use and continual exercise. But other masters of this art badly address this. Because they do not know that theory and practice are diverse as first possessing a little of practice they put themselves to teaching; in that they proceed and go in oblivion of the ancient use of creating of Masters. You know that in not long before, that those of a level of doctor were sent for an examination of their knowledge and judged as to their sufficiency and then given their privileges. So is done with masters of fence. So first they are examined and then they teach to see if they know the theory of fence and all the other things that are necessary. And they put a scholar in front of them, having them throw bad attacks and making bad guards with the intention of them showing what sins the scholars posses. Afterwards they are placed with diverse good scholars which they are to sufficiently manage. And so they are given privilege by other masters and with patent are able to open a school and this is the authentic master, giving the true art. Because permitting one who has not done this to teach that which is sufficient is not done.

Page 7b

Lep: They very badly make those, for whose guilt the good custom lacks.

Gio: This is a lack of time that a long going is a thing corrupt and of teachers still that leaving cancellation of reason of the privilege. But for following the start of reason I say that now is all the counters. Because seeing much that makes a master and teaching that which is done in the prevalent occupation. But those which succeed badly, must charge the same, then they manage under the discipline of made things. Because that (as I have said before) other is the knowledge

and other is the teaching. The diversity is manifest. Because one that only has the practice is good at work, but he that has theory is good at the other, and he that has theory and practice is better. And this is that which authenticates the creation of masters.

Lep: Now I know the excellence of this art and want the principal part of this foundation in theory, wanting to know what consists of the order and manner intended.

Gio: This is founded and divided into six primary principles. The first is that having taken (used) the sword, knowing what is the true edge and which is the false. Second, in what ways it is possible to attack. Third, the order of the guards and which are most important. Fourth, the manner of movement. Fifth, when finding yourself in said guards, what is possible in defense from all attacks by the enemy and how to offend him. Sixth and last, having a knowledge of mezza spada and tempo together.

Lep: Truly I now know when this manner is different and it is very easy to follow the results of this. Now if you will follow principle to principle and expand upon all, that is, that of your reasoning that is not without profit.

Gio: First is the true edge. When one has the sword in the right as in the left hand, the cutting edge that looks opposite the wrist is the true edge and the other is the false. This is the first principle. Second, the sword is able to attack in three modes, that is, the mandritto, the riverso and the thrust. But the mandritto is divided into five natures. The riverso in five similar. The thrust in three.

Lep: One does not think to say that these natures agree and which they are.

This section talks about the various types of attacks.

Page 8b

Gio: All the attacks are these: mandritti, roversi, or thrusts. But each of these have within them more properties and second diversity of attacks. Because the mandritto has fendente, squalibro (squalibrato), tondo, ridoppio or tramazzone. The roverso has similar qualities as the aforementioned. The thrust has three properties. That is, the imboccata, stoccata and the punta roversa... The mandritta is so called because commences on the right side. It is called a fendente because it cuts through the head to the feet from the right line. But squalibro is so called because it passes squalibro¹. That is from the left shoulder to the right knee of your adversary. The tondo or traverso demands that it turns sideways². The ridoppio is where the right edge of the sword goes from below and finishes at the point of the right shoulder of the enemy. Tramazzone are where you make a molinello with the joint of the hand. The roversi are called such because they are the opposite of the mandritti commencing from the left side. They are similar to the mandritti, that is, they are of the same properties. Coming to the thrusts, that which is made with the hand high is the imboccata and with the hand low is the stoccata. When it comes from the left side it is called

¹ *A diagonal cut. Called a squalibrato by Marozzo.*

² *That is horizontal.*

the punta riversa.

Lep: Is it not possible to attack with the false edge of the sword?

Gio: Yes, but rarely. Because the false edge is most for parrying than for attacking. It is true that this is divided into more natures. But because two are the most necessary, that is the falso dritto and the falso manco. The falso dritto is made from the right side and goes rising in line as the mandritto. The ridoppio falso manco is made from the left side and goes rising in the line as a riverso ridoppio. This is when it is a falso.

This section defines the guards.

Lep: I have a great interest in these two principles. Now will you mention in this second piece, the guards.

Gio: Now seeing the guards I say that there are many. Some low, some high. But the most important are eight. Four high and four low. Two are made with the right foot forward and two with the left and they have two names. That is the coda lunga and the porta di ferro. The coda lunga is when one holds the sword to the outside of the right side. This is divided into two alternate guards called the coda lunga stretta and the coda lunga alta. The coda lunga stretta is that which is made with the right foot forward and the coda lunga alta with the left foot [forward], always keeping the sword to the outside of the right side and the arm well extended, outside the vicinity of the knee and with the point looking to the enemy. “Questa é cosi detta a similitudine de gli huomini grandi, I quali di continuo da assai gente accompnati sono, & però si dice per volgare proverbio, Guardati da quelli che hanno la coda lunga, cioè che hanno seguito. Et non altrimenti bisogna da questa guardia guardarsi, perche há la coda lunga.” The second is said porta di ferro which is in the similitude of an iron door, that if one wants to bring down, takes much work and art. Wanting to attack one in this guard needs art and knowledge. This is similarly divided into two natures: the said porta di ferro and the cinghiale. The porta di ferro is first known when it is with the right foot forward and the sword hand at the inside of the knee and the point of the sword looking to the enemy. But the cinghiale porta di ferro is made when the left foot is forward and crossing, that is towards his left side and the sword hand is close by the inside of the left knee and the right shoulder looks towards the enemy. This asks for a comparison of the Cinghiale or as it is called the Porco Selvatico. This is when in the assault he goes in a traverse with the teeth to attack and this is a low guard.

Page 9b

Lep: Haverei grato sapere, che havendo voi detto coda lunga stretta alla una delle guardie, se alla altra dire similmente si portra porta di ferro stretta.

Gio: Stretta, larga and alta are said: because this guard are made in three ways like the coda lunga. But to go in briefness, I do not intend to mention the others and I contend that now having a knowledge of the porta di ferro like the coda lunga many with the right, when with the left forward, there is another little difference. But you will be curious to know all that I say. He that has the right foot forward a step, which is not great or small, but in proportion with the fist of the

sword to the inside and close by the right knee, and the point of which along with the right shoulder is looking towards the enemy. This is called the porta di ferro stretta which is a most secure guard. But if your fist is distant from the knee and a little opposite your left side and the point a bit towards the ground, this is the porta di ferro larga because the body is uncovered. Being in the porta di ferro larga if you raise the fist of the sword a little, this makes the porta di ferro alta (as it is more high than the other two). And this is the same for the cinghiale porta di ferro. Now the guard of the coda lunga is divided into three natures. The first is made with the right foot forward of your right side and the sword fist is to the outside yet close by the right knee and the point and body look towards the enemy. This is the coda lunga stretta as it is a narrow guard and is very secure. The second is made by bringing the fist and sword back, having the point low. This is the coda lunga larga as the sword is more removed from the enemy. Third, being in the coda lunga larga, turning the sword point to the rear is called the coda lunga distesa. This because the sword is extended back. This still takes the name of coda lunga. With the left foot forward it is also possible to make three guards, that is the coda lunga alta, the coda lunga larga and the coda lunga distesa and these are so named for the abovementioned reasons.

Lep: Non mi pento già io, Meser Giovanni, della mia curiosità, poi che mi ha fatto intendere da voi più di quello che era la intenzione mia, merce della vostra gentilezza: però seguite il ragionare dell'altre.

Gio: When the guards are high. The first is called the guardia d'alicorno. One knows this when the impugnatura (grip) is turned up and the arm is extended with the point a little lowered and looks to the face or the chest of the enemy in the similitude of a unicorn: which assaulting fights in that way with the horn. The second is the guardia di testa. This is when you have the arm well extended to the right of the enemy's face and the sword traversing, that is that the point is opposite your left side and a little towards the ground. This is so it secures the area above. The third is the guardia di faccia and is when the arm is well extended and the palm is up with the true edge of the sword looking to the inside. That is towards the left side and the point together with the right flank looks to the face of the enemy. This is still said because it is a good turn. The fourth is called the guardia d'entrare. This is made counter to the aforementioned, that is, with the arm extended towards the face of the enemy but with the palm down and the true edge of the sword looking to the outside, that is, towards the right. The right side of the body is turned a little towards the adversary. This is so called because it is strong for entering. These four guards are able to be made in two ways, either with the right or the left foot forward. This is the third principle.

Lep: Now I wish to know if the alto (high guard) have any other guards that are in use than which you have mentioned?

Gio: Three of them still remain, of which, in order that you have notice of all, I will give you the reasoning. The first is called the guardia alta and it is known when the impugnatura (grip) of the sword looks high with the arm well extended and the point turned behind. This is so called because it is held as high as possible. The second is made over the left arm. The third under with the point pointing back and holding back the same name. But having already enough of all the guards, the this fourth principle we [give the] reason of moving in these.

Lep: I am grateful. But first I would like to know with the said guards, that have been named diversely, of those others you talked about, what reason it is said? Because in this time I would like to hear your diverse thoughts.

Gio: here you should know that each of the names are positions of the ancient guards and in modern [times] the use is confirmed and is not all, but the best part that has light in this art. Each are understood and accepted. Not in other manners other than as said. But the need to introduce new names to the ear to get used to first are not known otherwise; that one trouble without profit and a mutation without usefulness. Truly it is that each is formed in its own manner provided that it is understood. But the following is the agreed rule and the use of it, as you will find that we have like this left.

Page 11

Lep: Since you have satisfied me with the names and the reason of these attributes of the guards, next, bring to my cognition the manner of moving in them.

Gio: With reason and the art of movement and in finding your adversary in all the guards, and this starting with one or the other foot, for traversing, as with the pushing of one foot or the other forward, secondly the time and the need. Nevertheless the movement should be with steps that are neither big nor small and the most useful: because going forward and back without disordering the person, accompany always the hand with the foot. But there is a need to admonish that the leg that is forward is bent a little at the knee and remains straight towards the enemy. The leg to the rear should be a little curved and the foot always in a traverse; in the manner that every movement is full of grace.

Lep: Additionally, give me more of manner of moving in these guards with the sword in hand that I have not understood sufficiently.

Gio: Supposing that you have the sword at the left side in the act of putting the hand to it and the right foot with the heel close by the left, both of the knees straight and not arched, accompanied with as much grace as possible. That is making the right foot forward opposite your right side. In that time extend the arm and make a falso and a riverso squalimbro or make two riversi, the first being a tondo and the second a squalimbro, going with the sword into a coda lunga stretta. Here step forward with the left foot to your left side making in that instant a falso and a mandritto squalimbro and the sword go in the cinghiale porta di ferro. You will then go forward a step with the right foot and in that time turn a dritto tramazzone such that you stop in a porta di ferro stretta. Then increase forward with the left foot making a falso and a riverso squalimbro and the sword will go into the coda lunga alta. You will then step forward with the right foot and in the same time turn a riverso ridoppio stopping the sword in the guardia di alicorno and being strong in said guard thrust with an imbroccata without stepping and the sword will stop in the porta di ferro stretta. Here retire the right foot back a step and all in one time make a falso and a riverso squalimbro and the sword will return to the coda lunga alta. Throw the left foot back and turn a mandritto tramazzone which stops in the porta di ferro stretta. Then return the right foot back a step turning in that tie a dritto tramazzone which ends in the cinghiale porta di ferro. Here retire the left foot back making in that instant a falso and a riverso squalimbro and the sword will return to the coda lunga stretta and here you will have returned to the same guard as at first.

Lep: I think that this is good information on all the attacks that are possible with the sword and the guards with their names and the manner that they are placed and in moving in them. Now the fifth and sixth

principles the which are more important and not grave in reason, the most that you are able and in particular the single sword. And in time, discourse on the other arms.

Gio: To me nothing increases but I hope to be able to please. But the hour is late and the reasoning is not short. I esteem that it is not outside the different purpose tomorrow.

Lep: As you please.

The Second Day of the First Book
The reason of Fencing with the single sword.

Page 14

The one and the other are good. However, the attacks of the thrust are best. Because the thrust is of less time, is closer to the enemy and is more deadly.

When you find yourself on guard with the right foot forward, you will make two times; that is the parry and the attack. In the time that you parry you will bring the left foot close to the right, and in attacking you will step forward with the right foot. And so the the left foot accompanies the parry and the right the attack. And on the contrary, when you parry and attack in one time between going with the sword you will go forward with the right foot followed by the left.

But when make these guards with the left foot forward, the right always accompanies the parry and the attack and the left leg follows the right.

The following section gives drills for single sword where the defender works primarily out of the coda lunga stretta guard. This is a base guard that is one of the principal guards for dall'Agocchie.

Page 14b

Lep: I am pleased with these advertisements. Most that this declaration of the fifth principal will be given to me easily. Above the which aspect is your reasoning.

Gio: I would like in this fifth principle to demonstrate all the modes of defending from the enemy and offending him. When he desires to attack, with the edge as with the point, high or low, you will remain strong in the coda lunga stretta. This guard is the principal. I sayb that being strong in this [guard] against your enemy, and if he desires to attack to the head with a dritto fendente, you will bring the left foot close by the right, turning the body as I have said to the right side and at the same time raising the sword to the guardia di testa parrying the attack: immediately push forward the right foot throwing to the head a mandritto sgualimbro accompanied by a riverso. You should then return to said guard. Or when you have parried said attack in the guardia di testa you will be able to attack with two tramazzoni or thrust with an imbroccata to the chest accompanied with a dritto tramazzone. You will then step with the right foot opposite to the left side of the enemy and parrying with a half mandritto, immediately turn a riverso to the face

followed by another *riverso*. Or, thrust with a *punta riversa* to the chest together with a *riverso tramazzone* stopping in the previously mentioned guard. You will then be able to step forward with the right foot followed by the left and parrying said *fendente* in the *guardia di faccia* you will thrust at the same time at the face. For your defense you will turn a *riverso tramazzone* going into the aforementioned guard. In the same time that he attacks your head, thrust him with a *punta riversa* to the chest or attack his hand with a half *mandritto*, and for your defense immediately go into the *guardia di faccia* parrying the enemy's attack. Return to the same guard. But when he attacks the head with a *mandritto squalimbri* or *tondo* you will be able to follow the same order as given above. As in the same parry and the same attack. When you go with the sword to parry in the *guardia di testa*, lower the point towards the earth turning the body to the rear to your right side. Keep the arm well extended rendering yourself most secure. You will then leave turning the vain attack and immediately attack with that which seems most commodious.

Lep: I would like you to tell me this most clearly.

Gio: When you go to said attack, avoid with the body, throwing it back. All you "poscerete" below the left foot feign a parry. But leaving, the attack passes, you will thrust him in the flank or turn a *dritto tramazzone* to the sword arm. Having done this, settle into the *coda lunga stretta* and this is how many give place to the attack.

Lep: Now I have good understanding.

Gio: Now, having returned to the *coda lunga stretta* where the enemy attacks with a *mandritto* to the leg, you will parry with the false edge of the sword, increasing the right foot forward and in that time turn to the head two *dritti tramazzoni*. Then make the left leg follow the right to the rear and immediately return to the aforementioned guard. Or, having parried you will be able to make a rising *riverso* followed by an *imbroccata*. You will still be able to throw the right foot close by the left and thrust in that time to the face: however, immediately return to the previous guard. But when he throws a *mandritto ridoppio*, you will be able to defend with a *mezzo mandritto squalimbri* and give him a *riposte* to the head with a *riverso tondo* or with a *punta riversa* to the chest followed by a *riverso tramazzone*. With this you will settle into the aforementioned guard. But in the case that he wants to attack your head with a *riverso fendente* you will do into the *guardia di testa* and here parrying him you will immediately step with the right foot to his right side turning to the head two *mandritti* from the wrist. Or you may attack with an *imbroccata* to the chest. You can parry still parry in the *guardia d'entrare* stepping with the right foot to his right side and in that time thrust to his face and then return to the same guard. But if the enemy attacks your head with a *riverso squalimbri* or *tondo* you will be able to strike with the false edge of the sword and immediately turn a *riverso* to his head or thrust with a *imbroccata* to the flank. You will still defend going into the *guardia d'entrare* and in the same time thrust him in the chest. Feign a parry and leave turning the vain attack and you will be able to attack as is most opportune. But immediately adapt yourself to the aforementioned guard. But when he responds with a *riverso* to the leg, you will be able to parry with a *riverso ridoppio* and immediately put forward the right foot turning to the head a *dritto tramazzone* or thrust with an *imbroccata* to the chest. Throw the leg back thrusting to the face or turn a *riverso* to the sword arm. Immediately

return to the coda lunga stretta. But if he throws a riverso ridoppio you should parry with a riverso and attack as you see fit. Immediately accommodate yourself in the previous guard. But if he wants to attack with a punta sopramano you will strike it with the false edge of your sword, lowering the point to the ground, turning well the “nodo” and the body behind to your right side. All in one time turn two dritti tramazzoni to the head ultimately ending in the porta di ferr. You will then be able to parry with a half mandritto, thrusting the chest with a punta riversa or slicing the face with a riverso. Accompany it with another riverso and return to the previously mentioned guard. You will then be able to thrust with said imbrocata throwing the right foot close to the left and in the same time beat him from below with a riverso ridoppio and immediately step forward and thrust him in the face with a punta sopramano. Your defense will be similar to that of said imbrocata in that you throw the the right foot behind a step while giving a half mandritto to the enemy’s hand and ending in the cinghiale porta di ferro. Then immediately give a falso and a riverso returning the right foot forward. Return to the afore named guard. But when the enemy thrust with a stoccata to the chest you should parry with a falso dritto turning well the “nodo” (joint) and the body as I have said. In the same time turn to his head two mandritti from the wrist. You should then closely parry with a half mandritto and immediately thrust him in the face. Then for your parry turn a riverso squalibro with a return to the previously mentioned guard. This same stoccata may be accompanied with your true edge against the sword of your enemy, thrusting all in one tempo with the point to the chest and with the sword finding itself in the guardia di faccia where for your shield you will turn a riverso tramazzone returning to the aforementioned guard. For your shield you will still throw a half mandritto at the enemy’s hand, throwing in that time the right foot back in a pass and immediately return to the guard which is reason or when he throws said stoccata you will be able to step with the right foot to his right side and in that instant turn a riverso tramazzone to his sword arm. But the left foot must follow the right and this is the defense and offense that is possible for countering mandritti, riversi and the thrust while finding oneself strong in the coda lunga stretta.

The following section is for single swordplay from the coda lunga alta guard.

Page 16 B

Lep: The order that you will keep the reason of the guard, but it remains truly the greatest satisfaction.

Gio: You “converra” in the others to hold the same order: because this is the best way and most easy that is possible for conducting all the knowledge of this art. And so I say that finding yourself with the sword in the coda lunga alta versus your enemy, and it happening that he attacks with a mandritto to the head, you will step with the right foot forward and all in one time go into the guardia di testa defending and making the left foot follow the right. Immediately you will thrust with an imbrocata to the chest or you will turn to the head two dritti tramazzoni. But for your defense you will return the right foot back a step together with a riverso stopping in said guard. Still it is possible to let the attack pass and attack as it is opportune. It is possible to step with the right foot parrying with a mandritto squalibro and immediately give him a mandritto tondo to the head or slice with a riverso to the face. When done return the right foot back

throwing in that time a *riverso tramazzone* that returns you to the same guard as before. In a similar manner when your enemy throws said *mandritto* to step with the right foot forward and go with the sword into the *guardia di faccia* and defend thrusting immediately to the face. When done return to the afore named guard. Alternately between when he throws the attack give him a *mezzo mandritto* to the sword hand stepping with the right foot to his left side and immediately put yourself in the previous guard. But when he responds with a *mandritto* to the leg you will parry with a *falso dritto* and in the parry step forward with the right foot. All in one time you will turn a rising *riverso* to his arm or turn to the head a *dritto tramazzone*. You will then throw the leg back and thrust with a *stoccata* to the face and immediately put yourself in the *coda lunga alta*. But if your enemy throws a *riversa* to the head you will immediately go into the *guardia di testa* to defend and stepping in that time with the right foot you will turn two *dritti tramazzoni* to the head or thrust with an *imbroccata* to the chest. You will then parry in the *guardia d'entrare* and in the same time thrust him in the face. Leaving his attack vain immediately attack with that which is most convenient returning to the previously mentioned guard. But when he responds with a *riverso* to the leg throw the foot back and in that time thrust him in the face returning immediately to a useful guard. But when your enemy thrust with a *punta sopramano* you will be able to step forward with the right foot parrying with the false edge in the manner that “*vi diffi ne gli avvertimenti di sopra.*” That is turning the body behind to the right together with the joint of the hand (wrist) turning two *dritti tramazzoni* to the head. When that is done take up the same guard. You will then be able to step forward with the right foot and parry with a *mezzo mandritto squalibro* and immediately attack him in the chest with a *punta riversa* or slice his face with a *riverso tondo* following it with another *riverso* that returns you to the *coda lunga alta*. Similarly you will be able to return the left foot back a step and all in one time attack with a *mezzo mandritto* to the enemy's hand. Having done this make a turn of the hand returning the foot forward and settling into the aforesaid guard. But if he throws a *stoccata* to the chest you will avoid it with the false edge turning well the joint of the hand and the body together and all in one time increase forward attacking to the head with two *dritti* with the joint of the hand making the ultimate move to the *porta di ferro*. If he parries with the true edge and immediately thrusts to the face or slices with a *riverso tondo*, you will be able to step close with the foot accompanied with the forte of the true edge under his sword and thrust him in the chest. Return the left foot back and in that time give him a *mezzo mandritto* to the sword hand. You will then be able to similarly make a big step with the right foot to his left side and while stepping thrust him in the flank under the hand. Instead of said thrust, stepping with the right foot to his left side you may turn in one time a *riverso tramazzone* to his right arm. And this is the manner of defending from your enemy and offending him when he wants to attack, with the edge as with the point, some high and some low, returning to the aforementioned guard, the *coda lunga alta*.

The following section covers what dall'Agocchie calls the third guard or the porta di ferro stretta.

P. 18

Lep: This defense and offense which you have now spoken of is similar to the *coda lunga stretta*.

Gio: True, because these two guards are of the same nature, not different. That is the step that you make with the right foot is that which is not done less when you want to parry the attack of the enemy and to offend him. And still that is not different than that which I have said. For this, I do not have the intention to give the reason of it to you, and to demonstrate to you all those that in said guard are made possible: That is to say, it is better that you come to a cognition of all.

Lep: With this order I hope to obtain from you all that I wish.

Gio: Now see the reason of the third guard, that is the *porta di ferro stretta*, which is strong against your enemy. If he throws a *mandritto fendente* at [your] head, you will be able to strike it with a *falso manco*, making such that the left foot pushes the right forward. Then immediately slice with a *mandritto* to the face such that you return to said guard. Or, having parried said attack, step with the left foot to the right side of the enemy turning in that time a *riverso* to the head. When having parried said *fendente* with the *falso* you would be able to turn the fist down and immediately thrust to the face followed by a *dritto tramazzone*, stopping in the previously mentioned guard. Similarly it is also possible during the *fendente* to parry in the *guardia di testa*, stepping incontinently with the right foot to his left side and giving him two *dritti tramazzoni* to the head or thrusting him with an *imbroccata* to the chest ending in the aforementioned guard. You will be able to defend with a *riverso squalimbro* stepping with the left foot to his right side and immediately push the right [foot] forward, thrusting him in the flank with a *punta sopramano* or turning a *riverso* to the head. Again, one may parry said attack in the *guardia di faccia* and in the same time thrust him in the face and immediately return to the aforementioned guard. But if the enemy attacks above with a *mandritto squalimbro* or *tondo*, you will defend with a *guardia di testa* or *faccia*, secondly retiring as commodious and riposting as opportune. Against these it is possible to use all the same defenses that are made against a *mandritto fendente*. But I say that when you respond to a *mandritto* to the leg it is possible to throw the right foot close by the left, thrusting in that time to the face and returning to the *porta di ferro*. But if he throws a *riverso* above it is possible to strike it with the false edge of the sword and turn a *riverso* to the head or having stricken the attack turn the fist down and thrust to the face followed with a *dritto tramazzone* returning to said guard. It is also possible to parry in the *guardia di testa* and immediately attack with a *mandritto* or a *punta sopramano*. It is also possible to strike said *riverso* with the true edge of the sword and immediately turn the hand up and slice with a *mandritto* to the face or having stricken the attack make an *imbroccata* to the chest. It is also possible to parry in the *guardia d'entrare* and all in one time thrust to the face, returning to said guard. But if he throws a *riverso* to the leg you will defend with a *riverso ridoppio* and in one stroke turn a *riverso* to his head or thrust him in the flank, or throw the leg back thrusting him in the face in that instant.

Page 19

But in the case that he attacks with a *riverso ridoppio* you will parry with the true edge of the sword and attack him with a *riverso tondo* or a *punta riversa* followed by a *dritto tramazzone*, returning to the previous guard. But if he thrusts at your chest (with an *imbroccata*) it is possible to parry with the false edge of the sword stepping with the right foot to his right side and turning

a riverso to his arm then immediately returning to the porta di ferro. One may also defend well against said imboccata with a riverso squalibro and with quickness thrust him in the side with a punta sopramano. If he accompanies your edge with his sword immediately thrust him in the face. Another possibility in parrying is to parry with a dritto tramazzone, throwing in that time the right foot behind the left with the sword going into the cinghiale porta di ferro. Then step forward with the right foot accompanying it with a dritto tramazzone and return to the previous guard, but when he throws a punta sopramano it is possible to parry with a falso manco and you will be able to slice him in the face with a mandritto or turn a riverso to the head, making the one foot push the other forward. Otherwise having stricken said punta with the false edge of the sword, it is possible to make a half turn of the hand and all in one time push a thrust to the face accompanied with a dritto tramazzone, going into the above named guard. Similarly it can be defended with a riverso squalibro, stepping with the left foot opposite the right side of the enemy. Then pass by forward with the right and attack him with a riverso to the thigh or having parried it is possible to push an imboccata to the flank, stopping in the previous guard.

Page 19b

Still at said stoccata go in the guardia d'entrare, placing the strong of your true edge above the enemies sword, thrusting the point in the chest or when he has thrown said stoccata it is possible to step back with the right foot and in that time turn a dritto tramazzone to the sword arm ending in the cinghiale porta di ferro. Then immediately step forward with the right foot together with a mandritto from the wrist and settle into said guard. And this is the manner that one defends from all the attacks of the enemy and offends him, being firm in the porta di ferro stretta.

Lep: Hor ditemi, quaqndo io fossi in porta di ferro larga, óvero in porta di ferro alta, si potrebonno fare I medesimi schermi?

Gio: Almost all may be done. Because these three guards are of the same nature and there is but a little difference (as I have said) of one from the other. And so as to know, the wide guards are for wide play (giuoco largo) and the narrow [guards] for the narrow [play] (giuoco stretto). But to return to the reason for these, I say to you that when you find yourself in the cinghiale porta di ferro versus your adversary and he wants to attack you with a mandritto to the head, it is possible to step forward with the right foot and parry in the guardia di testa and immediately turn two dritti tramazzoni with the which you will stop in said guard. Still, you would be able to parry in the guardia d'entrare increasing forward the right foot and in the same time thrusting to the face. Still if you defend, striking with a rising falso manco to said attack, stepping immediately forward with the right foot and immediately turning a riverso to the head or slicing with a mandritto to the arm, putting yourself in the previously mentioned guard.

Page 20

It will be useful then to step forward, going with the sword into the guardia di faccia for defense and in that time thrust to the chest. Otherwise, having parried in the guardia di faccia it is possible to grow [step forward] with the left foot towards [opposite] the right side of the enemy and turn a riverso to the head and immediately return to your guard. But if he throws a riverso to the head you will be able to parry with the false edge of the sword and attack him in the head with a similar

riverso: or having parried with the false [edge] turn the fist down, pushing the point to the face. Still, you may strike with a riverso squalibro increasing in the time the right foot forward and thrusting with an imboccata to the flank. Closely go with the sword in the guardia d'entrare and here defend from him, pushing in the same time a thrust to the face. Then return to a useful guard. But when he responds with a riverso to the leg it is possible for you to grow [step] the right foot forward and parry with a riverso ridoppio, thrusting in reply with an imboccata to the chest. Or between him throwing at the leg you will throw the foot back thrusting in that time a thrust to the face and that being done return to the previous guard. But in the case that he pushes a punta sopra mano it is possible to parry with a falso and turn a riverso to his head or slice with a mandritto to the face. Still, you could strike with the true edge of the sword stepping immediately forward with the right foot and push a thrust to the flank. Alternately in pushing the imboccata, accompany it with your true edge over his sword and all in one time step forward and thrust the point to his chest. You would be able to do a similar defense by throwing the left foot behind the right and in that time turn a dritto tramazzone to his sword hand and immediately return to the cinghiale porta di ferro. But if the enemy wants to attack with a punta sotto mano you would be able to parry with a falso manco growing forward the right foot and immediately turn a riverso to the head or slice the face with a mandritto. Or having parried with the false [edge] you would be able to make a half turn of the fist and push a thrust to the face. It would be useful moreover in said stoccata to throw the left foot back and in that time turn a dritto tramazzone to the enemy's head. Or as he pushes the stoccata accompany it with your true edge growing the right foot forward and in the same time push a thrust to the chest. It is possible to closely parry with a riverso squalibro, stepping immediately forward and making an imboccata to the flank accompanied with a dritto tramazzone which will go into a porta di ferro. Therefore, immediately return the right foot back a step together with a mandritto from the wrist which stops in said guard. This finishes the declaration of these four guards most necessary. In which I have demonstrated the defense with the false edge as with the true edge of the sword, together with the offense and all that is possible.

Lep: In these two defenses, which do you hold best?

Gio: Both are good, but for fencing the true edge is best and most secure. Because, in always using the forte of the sword, that is the back half, and still (as I have said) it is always possible to attack with the point as with the edge, and mostly the point of the sword is hardly ever crossed of the presence of the enemy. But in contrast, defense with the false is less strong and less secure because the major part in this is the weak part of the blade (debole), the which is the forward half. "Ne mai si puo ferire di punta, & essa ancora si diparte dalla presenza del nimico." For these reasons I hold that the parries with the true edge are best and most secure.

Lep: I would hold that the sword has more strength in the forward half than in the back half.

Gio: In attacks it does have more strength but not in parrying.

Lep: After you have declared this to me, give me the reason for the guardia di Alicorno with the right foot forward, which I wish to know for its use and value and much use.

Gio: Neither will I discuss willingly. I say therefore that if you find yourself in said guard and your enemy throws a fendente to the head, you will be able to throw the left foot close by the right and go with the sword into the guardia di testa to defend and immediately grow (increase) the right foot forward and turn a mandritto from the wrist to the head or thrust an imboccata to the chest. Still, in parrying in the guardia di testa, one could feint with a dritto tramazzone (in the high parts) and all in one time turn a riverso to the thigh together with a riverso ridoppio, which returns to said guard. But when he wants to attack to the head with a mandritto squalibro or tondo, you will turn the left side behind the right and defend with the sword in the guardia di testa then bending the point to the ground and immediately turning two dritti tramazzoni to the head or thrusting to the chest. Alternately one may parry in the guardia di faccia and in the same time push a thrust to the face or parry with a mezzo mandritto squalibro and immediately respond with a punta riversa or a riversa tondo returning to your guard. But in the case that he throws a mandritto or riverso to the leg, throw the right foot back pushing an imboccata to the chest or turn a mandritto to the right arm. But if he throws a mandritto to the head, you will parry it with the sword in the same guard and in one time thrust to the flank. Then, make a rising riverso returning to the aforementioned guard. But when he thrusts with a punta sopra mano, you will be able to step with thy right foot opposite his left side making the left foot follow it and parry with a mandritto squalibro and immediately slice with a riverso to the head or thrust him in the chest with a punta riversa. Otherwise to do well against said imboccata throw the right foot close by the left and strike it to the outside with a riverso ridoppio and immediately grow the right foot forward and thrust at the face or you will be able to defend by hurling the right foot back a step and in the same time give a mandritto squalibro to the sword hand which will go into a cinghiale porta di ferro. You will then return “incontinente” to the guard “di qui si ragiona”. But if he throws a stoccata to the chest step with the right foot to the left side of the enemy and in that time beat it with a mandritto and immediately attack him with a cut or thrust and secondly “che vi tornerà bene”. Still, in that thrust you would be able to step with the left foot to his right side and strike it outside with the left hand then all in one time turn a riverso to the head or push a thrust to the face and arrange yourself in said guardia di Alicorno: “delle quale vi basterá quanto sin qui ve n’ ho dicharato.

Page 22

Lep: Come dell’altre, cosi di questa ancora da voi resto sodifatta, & con assai maggior facilitá ch’ io non pensava, essendo ella massimamente tenuta molto difficile da imparare. Ma l’ ordine che in essa si vede, ne farebbe ciascuno facilmente capace.

Gio: Observe now how they beguile that say that theory does not serve the art of fence. To which I respond that they walk not in the way. They are not able to teach perfectly being that this and that that demonstrate the principles, causes, effects, and finally the teaching with reason and with facility of order and the manner that one holds learning politely. But because I always have reason of that one simple guard for change (turn), now I want to reason them together. That is, when the one and when the other, secondly, that in these that you find yourself. Because it is not possible always to be firm in one that is not difficult.

Lep: The reason why?

Gio: For [the reason that] the variety of attacks that are not able to be thrown which reasoning in which guard is not proven. How one has the mandritti together with the imbrocata, which are given in the porta di ferro or cinghiale porta di ferro. The riversi are concluded in the coda lunga, now with the right foot forward and now with the left. The stoccata and the punta riversa are firm in one as the other guard. Nevertheless the true edge of the punta riversa finishes in the coda lunga stretta and the stoccata in the porta di ferro. Here is born the difficulty. But other than this “lo faccio ancora, acció che vi facciate in esse maggiormente pratico”.

Lep: Vi ringratio, & mene fate piacere; perche questo é il desiderio mio.

Gio: Think on this. If you find yourself with the sword in the coda lunga stretta and your enemy throws a mandritto to the head, you will go to parry in the guardia di faccia, increasing the right foot forward and all in one time pushing a thrust to the face. Then immediately return the right foot back a step accompanied by a riverso squalibro. With which, you will stop in the coda lunga alta. Now being in said guard, if he pushes a punta sopramano, step forward with the right foot making that the left follows and parry with a mandritto squalibro and all in one time turn a riverso tondo to the face followed by another riverso which goes into the coda lunga stretta. But if the enemy responds with a mandritto to the leg you will defend with the false edge of the sword and in the same time turn two dritti tramazzoni to the head ending in the porta di ferro stretta. But if in said guard and if he turns a riversa to the high parts, you will parry with a riverso squalibro, stepping in that time with the left foot opposite his right side and increase immediately the right attacking him with an imbrocata to the face accompanied with a dritto tramazzone which goes into a porta di ferro alta. If he throws a stoccata to the face, increase the right foot forward and with the sword go into the guardia d'Entrare accompanying all in one time your true edge above his sword and pushing a thrust to the chest. Then throw the right foot back a step together with a dritto tramazzone which stops in the cinghiale porta di ferro. Now return to the said guard and if he responds with a mandritto or riverso or a thrust, and in these attacks you are able to strike it with your true edge against the sword of the enemy and then step immediately forward with the right foot and thrust with an imbrocata to the chest accompanied with a dritto tramazzone in which you will settle in a porta di ferro larga. But in the case that he pushes a punta riversa to the face to give a mandritta to the head, strike the said thrust with a falso and when he turns the mandritto you will immediately go into the guardia di faccia, pushing in that time a thrust to the face and for your defense return the right foot back a step together with a riverso tramazzone which goes into a coda lunga alta. Being in said guard if he wants to attack with a fendente to the head, you will step forward with the right foot, raising the sword in the guardia do testa and here defend. But all in one time throw the left hand under his sword and make a presa [grip, wrestling move] and give immediately a mandritto to the head or leg as you wish. Return to the coda lunga stretta and this is the manner that one holds oneself in these guards. Many other things are possible but because having reason and sufficiency is good “che ci leviamo di qui” and that returns to hands for reason of when one is acceptable.

Lep: Io mi riporto á voi, in questo & in ogni altra cosa.

The third day of the first book. In which all the manner that one has to provoke and offend the enemy when you want to be the first to attack.

Lep: Now that we are following your reasons which you have demonstrated the manner of defending from the enemy and offending him, I wish for you to tell me the manner that one offends him when I want to be the first to attack in whichever guard.

Gio: The manner that you do this, in the case that you find yourself in the coda lunga stretta, the which, engaging as principal and wanting to be the first as I have said, I want you to provoke the enemy in the manner that I will say. That is, most securely possible to offend. Gather your left foot close by the right, step forward with the right foot and in this step strike his sword with the false edge of your sword and turning well the body behind your right side, in that time also turn a dritto tramazzone to the head. Or when you have struck the enemy's sword with the false edge you will be able to turn a riverso ridoppio to his right arm accompanied with an imbroccata. With this you will bring yourself into the porta di ferro. You would also be able to give a mezzo mandritto to the enemy's sword while stepping immediately forward with the right foot and push a punta riversa to the chest followed by a riverso tramazzone, the which goes into a coda lunga stretta. Otherwise it is possible to step forward with the left foot or with the right to his right side and thrust a punta riversa to his face. When he raises his sword to defend you will immediately expand the foot forward and in the same time turn a mandritto tondo to the head. Or having pushed said thrust you will turn the wrist [as in the thumb] down and thrust with an imbroccata to the chest and the sword stops in the porta di ferro. Alternately you may step forward with the right foot to the left side of the enemy and in that time throw to the "volto" a punta sopramano making the left foot follow the right to the rear and the sword will return to the coda lunga stretta. In two ways is it possible to provoke and attack.

Page 24

The first by slicing with a mezzo mandritto squalibro to the enemy's hand. Gather up in that time the body together with the sword to the rear into the porta di ferro stretta. This is the manner of inciting the enemy, that is to get him to uncover "habbia cagione di spingervi". If he thrusts you will immediately be able to go with the forte of the sword over that of the enemy increasing all in one time the right foot forward and thrusting him in the chest.

But in the case that he "sfalazzase", that is he turns his sword under yours to put it outside and attack, you will immediately turn the true edge of your sword and the body together against that of the enemy, raising the wrist up and thrusting to the chest in a punta riversa. Secondly it is possible to put the true edge of the sword over that of the enemy, stepping in that instant a littel forward with the right foot to his right side, that is making a "verrete á obligare" of his sword and easily you will be able to offend him with a punta riversa. But if in that time he disengages his sword above yours to attack, you will immediately turn your true edge to the outside against his and thrust to the face. This is the provocation together with the offenses that are possible, being in the aforementioned guard. The provocations that are best to know are of two causes. First to movement of the enemy's guard and incite an attack. This is the most secure (as I have said) for offending. The other is because said provocation comes about in offenses, which will make the

best advantage. This because you will go deliberately and without justice to attack, being that the enemy is strong in his guard you go with a similar disadvantage. Because he is able to make many strong counters. But I want you see that in a similar manner you will not be the first to go to attack, reserving however the times. But you will be strong in your guard with subtle foresight, having always the eyes to the enemy's hand.

Page 24b

Lep: But what if the enemy does not want to attack?

Gio: In that case I would suggest that you provoke him in the manner said above. Because in doing so he will make a strong response.

Lep: What if the enemy makes a counter to this provocation such that I cannot defend?

Gio: Make then your counters.

Lep: Tell me how to make these counters.

Gio: If the enemy strikes with the false [edge] to turn a tramazzone you will immediately go with the sword into the guardia di faccia, pushing a thrust to the face. This is the primary counter. Second, when he strikes with the false to give a riverso ridoppio to the arm, you will push a thrust to his chest or throw the right foot back a step together with a riverso squalimbri which goes into a coda lunga alta. Third, as he cuts your sword with a mandritto, turn a dritto tramazzone, throwing the right foot back in that time and the sword goes into the cinghiale porta di ferro. Fourth, when he pushes a punta riversa to attack with a mandritto, immediately go into the guardia d'entrare accompanying his sword with your true edge and pushing a thrust to his chest. Or, when he pushes said thrust, strike it with a riverso returning at the same time the right foot back a step and accompany it with another riverso squalimbri which goes into a coda lunga alta. Fifth, as he throws a punta to the chest, you will immediately throw the right foot opposite the left side of the enemy, turning all in one time a riverso tramazzone to the right arm which returns you to the coda lunga stretta. Sixth, when he slices with a mezzo mandritto to the hand, without stepping you will raise the sword into the guardia d'alicorno which will interrupt his intentions. Seventh and last, as he puts his sword over yours, you will immediately throw the right foot behind the left and in that time turn a riverso tramazzone which goes into the coda lunga alta. Still, you will be able to throw the right foot back a step turning in that instant a mandritto from the wrist which stops in the cinghiale porta di ferro. These are the counters to the provocations in the coda lunga stretta.

Lep: With these counters is born a doubt, which is this: That having done it in said manner, that I have made the provocation of the enemy and he counters, I want to know how it is possible to be secure in making these provocations?

Gio: I say, that as I have said of your counters, that you not remain as this that is not possible to make securely, because every turn that you have is judicious to make secure. This will gain you

much and diversity, because this variety makes judgement and shrewdness in provoking the enemy. Now I will give the provocations of the second guard which is the coda lunga alta. In this you must remain strong and be the first to provoke the enemy. Step forward with the right foot and make a falso and a mandritto against his sword, or having done the falso make a feint of turning a dritto tramazzone to the head but turn a riverso to the thigh. Still, you will be able to pass the right foot forward thrusting a stoccata to the face followed by a mandritto to the head or the leg as you wish.

Page 24b

Alternately you may step forward with the right foot pushing a punta sopramano to the flank and turning in that time the left side behind the right and for your defense throw the right foot behind the left together with a riverso squalibro which returns to a coda lunga alta. This is the second way of provoking the enemy when in said guard. These are the counters that when he steps forward with the right foot and makes a falso and mandritto you will immediately change your step turning in that time the true edge of the sword up stopping in the guardia d'Alicorno. But when he strikes with a falso and makes a feint of wanting to attack with a riverso, when he strikes with the falso turn a riverso tramazzone taking the left foot back and stopping in the coda lunga stretta. But if he pushes a thrust with the right foot forward to give you a mandritta to the head, without moving the feet, parry with the false edge of the sword and as he turns the mandritto to the head you will immediately step forward with the right foot and go into the guardia di faccia to defend, thrusting all in one time to the face. But if he during the thrust turns a mandritto to the leg you will throw the left foot close by the right and in the same time push to the face a punta riversa. But when he steps opposite your left side and pushes a thrust you will immediately turn a riverso tramazzone to the sword arm which stops in the coda lunga stretta and thus you will have an understanding of the counters.

Lep: I have a good understanding.

Gio: Now note these other provocations of the third guard which is the porta di ferro stretta. In which being strong and wanting to be the first to provoke the enemy,

Page 26

you will strike with a falso manco to his sword making the left foot push the right forward and immediately slice with a mandritto the right arm and the sword returns to said guard. Still, you may strike the sword with a riverso ridoppio, making the left foot follow the right and all in one time push an imboccata to the chest and the sword goes into the aforementioned guard. If you want to make a feint of giving a dritto tramazzone to the head and as he raises his sword to defend you will turn a riverso tondo to the thigh. You will be able to closely strike his sword with a mezzo riverso and all in one time step forward with the left foot and thrust him in the face with a punta riversa. Then immediately increase the right opposite his left side turning to the head a mandritto tondo. Or, having pushed said thrust you will be able to step forward with the right and thrust to the chest and for your defense make a riverso tramazzone to the sword hand putting in that time the right foot behind the left and returning to a coda lunga alta. You will be able to go

forward with the right foot and in the same time put the true edge of your sword over that of the enemy and push the point to the chest and after this return to a useful guard. These are the provocations that are possible when in the porta di ferro stretta.

Lep: Between all these provocations of which you have reasoned, impart to me the little differences one from the other.

Gio: It is true that there is a little difference because ultimately all the attacks resolve to one cut and one thrust. The reason is that being with the true edge, or with the false, or right or the left side or high or low, always make a cut similarly in attacking with an imbroccata or a stoccata or a punta riversa, always make a thrust and because all resolves to a cut and a thrust. But to follow the counters of the third guard, I say that when the enemy strikes your sword with a falso, you will immediately turn a dritto tramazzone throwing in that time the right foot back a step and the sword goes into the cinghiale porta di ferro. With this defense you have interrupted his intentions. But when he strikes your sword with a riverso ridoppio to attack with a punta sopramano in the strike you will step forward with the left but in pushing the thrust you will parry with a riverso squalibro and increase the right foot forward on making it and give an imbroccata to the flank. Or in increasing the right foot accompany the true edge of your sword over that of the enemy pushing in that time a thrust to the face. But if he makes a feint of giving a dritto tramazzone you will go with the sword into the guardia di faccia and as he throws the riverso to the thigh you will immediately hurl the right foot behind the left and turn a riverso to the arm. But when he strikes your sword with a riversa do not make a similar movement but in his pushing the punta riversa you will defend with a falso and if he turns the mandritto tondo throw the right foot back and give him a mezzo mandritto to the sword hand. If he pushes a thrust in order to give you a riverso ridoppio you will parry with the true edge and as he turns the ridoppio drive the right foot opposite his left side turning in that time a riverso squalibro which goes into a coda lunga stretta. But if he throws the two thrust, in the pushing of the first strike it with a falso, but in stepping that he makes with the right foot to give the second,

Page 27

you will parry with a mezzo mandritto wounding him in the chest with a punta riversa followed by a riverso squalibro which stops in the coda lunga stretta. But if he puts his true edge over your sword to attack the chest, you will immediately turn the left side behind the right throwing in that time a rising riverso to the arm and the sword goes up into the guardia d'alicorno. It is also possible between his pushing of said punta to step with the right foot in a traverse and in the same time turn your sword over his and push a thrust to the chest. These are the counters that are possible to make being in the aforementioned guard of the porta di ferro stretta.

Lep: Mi par che questi contrarii siano quasi tutti fondati nel ritornare un passo in dietro.

Gio: There is no doubt in this. I want you to know that every turn that the enemy strikes your sword with the true edge or the false for disordering the guard, that is to say to be most secure in offense, the counter is that when he strikes said sword to your right side you will immediately turn a riverso tramazzone retiring in that time the foot that is forward to the rear or in a traverse. But

when he strikes to your left side you will immediately turn a dritto tramazzone, “pur trahendo il piede”, that makes the behind a step. Because doing so interrupts his designs.

Lep: Now I know that many are shamed. Which say that the retreat is a big shame. Rather, it is the contrary, that is, that this other is not but a mutation of the guard. Which is a secure defense and most necessary.

Gio: If this is not done it is an imperfect art. Because there are many attacks that are not able to be parried without taking a step back. But leaving is nevertheless in his opinion and following the reason of provoking the enemy, when he remains firm in the cinghiale porta di ferro and that you will similarly find yourself in said guard wanting to be the first to provoke, I say that it is possible to push a thrust to the face stepping forward with the right foot and turning a mandritto tondo to the head. Or after having done said thrust, turn a dritto tramazzone. Still you will be able to in the increase of the foot push a punta riversa to the face. When he has raised his sword to defend, you will immediately step with the left foot opposite his right side pushing an imbrocata to the flank followed by a dritto tramazzone which will stop in the cinghiale porta di ferro. This is the manner of provoking the enemy in said guard. Now the counter is as the enemy pushes the thrust with the right foot forward you will defend with a falso. But when he attacks with a mandritto tondo or a tramazzone immediately go into the guardia di faccia pushing a thrust to the face or throw the left foot behind the right offending his sword arm with a mezzo mandritto. But when he pushes a thrust to attack with an imbrocata to the flank you will be able to step forward with the right foot and strike with the true edge of the sword, but in the step that he makes to push a thrust to the flank you will parry with a riverso ridoppio and immediately attack to the chest with a punta sopramano and for your defense you will turn a riverso squalibro taking the right foot back and the sword stops in the coda lunga alta. These are the counters to the said provocations in the cinghiale porta di ferro.

P. 28

Lep: These counters are beautiful. But because much has been mentioned of the mezzo mandritto, I would know why they are and why they are called thus and I want to follow the reason of the provocations that are made possible in other guards.

Gio: I will say. The mandritto squalibrato starts at at the left shoulder and ends at the right knee of the enemy and for this reason it is a completed attack. The half mandritto is of the same nature but it is not a completed attack and so is of less time. This is made most when you find the enemy close and is most secure. Now follows the provocations of the fifth and last guard, that is the alicorno with the right foot forward. I say that when you find yourself firm in this guard and you want to be the provoker, you will increase the right foot opposite his left side making the left follow and in that time turn a mandritto squalibro to the sword and immediately slice the face with a riverso tondo accompanied with a riverso squalibro which stops in a coda lunga stretta. Or having provoked a response you will push a punta sopramano without moving the feet which ends in a porta di ferro and with these provocations you will draw him.

Lep: Follow with his counters.

Gio: As the enemy turns the mandritto to your sword hurl the right foot behind the left turning in that time a riverso tramazzone which goes into a coda lunga alta. Mut when he pushes the punta sopra mano without the increase of the foot you will be able to make a gesture of following with an imbrocatta to the face and in case he raises his sword to defend you will immediately lower the point of your sword under that of the enemy and all in one time push a thrust to the flank,

Page 28b

returning to the porta di ferro stretta. With this we have the end of the provocations and the counters to the above said fifth guard most necessary.

Lep: Now that I have an understanding of the manner that one provokes the enemy and in attacking together with the counters, finding myself in whichever guard given above, I desire to know of these guards, which is best?

Gio: I maintain that all are good and secure. Because in them is the foundation of all the art of fencing: For this cause all are taught. Nevertheless, that which is best, is that which one is more accustomed to and made with the most practice.

Lep: What consists of this practice?

Gio: In practicing much, as I said, and with variety. For the reason that in practicing many talents you will come to judiciousness, shrewdness and good experience. However, I exhort you to not do as many that have learned but a month and that have not exercised with others, wanting that they think for being exercised with a master they know much. Worse is that they say they have learned secret blows which cannot be parried and with this abuse they do not know good things.

Lep: Is it not true that many times I have meant to say that masters that have secret attacks are inevitable?

Gio: Do not believe them. For the reason that I have converse with other than my masters with infinite intentions of this art. Never have I seen those that have learned such a thing. Rather have I said that I have remained clear through experience that every dritto has a riverso and that every blow has a parry. For this creed that if this were the true one, this art would be held in much reputation of what is kept. But leaving the part of this reasoning I give the sixth principle.

Page 29

Lep: I want first for you to declare to me a little, which is this: as you have said, how his attack is possible to parry, as to attack the enemy.

Gio: With time, because in his turn that you want to attack with time you will be on the offensive.

Lep: Declare more to me.

Gio: I am able to give you the occasion of reason of time. I say. There are five modes of this tempo of attack. The first is when having parried the attack of the enemy, now is the time to attack. Second is when the attack has traversed to your outside, then is the time to make your response. Third is when he raises the sword in offense, during the raising of the hand it is the time to attack. Fourth is when he moves injudiciously from one guard to another, then it is the time to attack. Fifth is when your opponent is strong in his guard and he raises or moves a foot that is forward for changing his pace or to accost you. During the raising of the foot is the time to attack. This because it is not possible for him to offend when he is inconvenienced.

Lep: But when he moves to the rear?

Gio: It is still a time. But not so much as in moving forward.

Lep: Having declared the modes of which is knowledge of timing of attack, I want you to tell me in what times it is possible to attack with the sword.

Gio: The dui tempi, un tempo and mezzo tempo. Due tempi is when you have parried with the sword, then it is possible to attack. Un tempo is when you attack without parrying or when you parry and attack in one instant. Mezzo tempo is when you attack during the attack of your enemy. But to return to the reason of attacking outside of time, he who deliberately goes without some advantage in order to attack with the enemy strong in their guard, goes out of time. Because in that case he finds himself vacant or he is able to make counters as I said in my declaration of the fifth principle.

Lep: Now that I have seen the manner of knowing the time of attack, I want to know how I should move the feet or change my guard with justice and without peril?

Gio: In knowing that in moving a step or changing the guard, the enemy may push the sword to you on arrival. You should move back or turn to the inside, turning in that time a tramazzone against his sword. You are able to move the foot back or in moving strike the enemy's sword with a falso or with the true edge, throwing a cut or a thrust on the second occasion. Because doing this you move with justice and without peril.

Lep: It seems you have demonstrated these to me.

Gio: It is true that these are that same manner. However (as I said in the principio), it is not possible without going securely to attack, keeping always the time.

Lep: Show to me the reasoning of today and your mentioning of the times. I want to know better and more clearly those that you want to infer.

Gio: As I have said before, if your enemy moves the feet or raises the sword, or changes the guard without justice, that these are the times to attack. Still I want to say that when you know these times, without doing otherwise you will go to be hurt. But returning to the sixth principle, the reason of the narrow half sword with the true edge as with the false.

Page 30

Here I will say the offenses that are possible together with the counters. That is to say the "intieramente restiate da me sodisfatto."

Lep: Voi non mi potete fare cosa piu grata di questa.

Gio: Finding yourself with the enemy false edge to false edge, that is with the false edges of the swords lowered together, and you wanting to be the first to attack, you will increase the right foot opposite his left side turning to the head a mandritto tondo and immediately return the same foot back together with a riverso squalimbri which goes into a coda lunga alta. The counter is this: when the enemy turns the mandritto you will immediately go into the guardia di faccia to defend, pushing in that time a thrust to the face or ass he moves to turn the mandritto throw the forward foot back a step turning in that instant a mandritto squalimbri to the right arm which goes into a cinghiale porta di ferro. Second, you would be able to increase the foot forward and make a feint of turning a riverso to the head returning the foot back immediately with a mandritto tramazzone which goes into a cinghiale porta di ferro. The counter is made as he makes the feint, you will not move, but when he turns the riverso go with the foot that you have forward to the rear and in the same time turn a dritto tramazzone against his sword and push a thrust to his chest. Third, immediately turn the fist down, increasing the right foot forward and push an imbrogata to the flank. The counter of this is as he turns the fist to push the thrust you will immediately retire the foot that you have forward back a step turning all in one time a riverso tramazzone to the enemy's arm. Fourth, increase forward the right foot to the left side of the opponent, lowering in that time the point of the sword under his, pushing a thrust to the chest. Then immediately drive the forward foot back together with a riverso squalimbri which stops in a coda lunga alta. The counter is made like this. Between when he lowers the point, engage his sword with your true edge, giving a stoccata to the face or you will immediately make an avoidance with the foot to the rear throwing in the same time a mandritto squalimbri to the enemy's hand. Fifth, in passing the foot forward making the feign of an attack with a mandritto you will immediately engage his sword with your left hand under yours making then a mandritto to the head or leg as you wish. The counter of this is as he makes the feint to be able to make the presa you will immediately return back a step the foot that is forward and in that time attack him with a fendente to the head. Sixth, you will be able to strike the enemy's sword to his left side, increasing forward and slicing his face with a mandritto together with a riverso which returns you to the coda lunga stretta. Or, as you have struck his sword, make a half turn of the fist and push a thrust to the face and also push forward one foot with the other. For your defense you will throw the right foot back a step together with a dritto tramazzone which goes into the cinghiale porta di ferro. The counter of this sixth is when the enemy strikes the sword you will immediately return the forward foot to the rear turning all in one time a tramazzone to the head. And these are the offenses together with the counters that are possible when false to false with the enemy.

Lep: This narrow that you have stated, is it possible to do with one or the other foot forward?

Gio: It is possible to do. But the difference is that with the left foot forward you step with the right and with the right [forward] there is a need that you increase the right foot making the left follow. This is the order of moving the feet. But to follow the reason of the half sword we return to the enemy with true edge to true edge. That is with the true edges kissing each other and you wanting to be the first to attack. You will be able to turn a riverso tramazzone to the head stepping in that time with the left foot to his right side and the sword ends in the coda lunga stretta. The counter is made as the enemy steps with the left foot to give the riverso, you will immediately turn the true edge against his sword pushing a thrust to the chest or drive the right foot back a step and turn in that time a riverso squalimbri which goes into a coda lunga alta.

Second narrow. You should turn the reverse of the hand up making the point of your sword go to the face of the enemy and when he defends the point you will immediately slice the chest with a mandritto that goes down, slicing with a riverso squalibro which ends in a coda lunga stretta. The counter of this is when the enemy turns the point of the face to slice with a mandritto throw the right foot back a step turning all in one time a riverso squalibro which stops in a coda lunga alta. Third. You should made a feign of giving a riverso and then turn to the head a mandritto tondo and for your defense throw the right foot back a step accompanied with a dritto tramazzone which stops in the cinghiale porta di ferro. The counter to the previous is that as the enemy feints do not move but when he turns the mandritto be in the guardia di faccia and push a thrust to the face then drive the right foot back a step together with a riverso squalibro which goes into a coda lunga alta. Fourth narrow. You should strike with the hilt of your sword upwards into his to his left side stepping all in one time forward with the left foot and turning to the head a riverso tramazzone which stops in a coda lunga alta. Then counter is that when the enemy strikes with the hilt against your sword you will immediately throw the right foot back a step and give in that time a mandritto tramazzone to the sword hand which returns you to a cinghiale porta di ferro. Fifth. You should make a half turn of the wrist while not moving the sword from his in the act of turning a riverso tramazzone and in that time turn the pommel of your sword over his wrist to the outside, lowering it, and it is now possible to attack the head with a riverso. Still, in the same time it is possible to give the left foot behind his right leg that facilitates a fall or with the left hand you may make a presa to his sword arm and you will be able to attack him as you deem most opportune. The counter to the aforementioned is as he turns the fist of the sword you will immediately step with the left foot opposite his right side turning to the head a riverso squalibro which goes into a coda lunga alta. Sixth narrow. In arriving at half sword turn the fist push down his sword and immediately slice with a riverso tondo to the face followed with a riverso squalibro which ends in a coda lunga stretta. The counter to this is that when the enemy pushes your sword down you will immediately throw the right foot back a step and turn in that time a riverso tramazzone to the enemy's hand which goes into a coda lunga alta. This for the graciousness of God will I give the end of the fence of the single sword.

Lep: Of it I remain with great satisfaction. But, I have some doubt, the which I wish that you will declare to me one that is this: There are many that say that in doing their duty, that there is not much subtlety in this art.

Gio: How is it meant, this "subtlety"?

Lep: They say that none feign, none "sfallaza", and that none have the tempo of avoidance of the body and similar things.

Gio: They say these things because it is rare to find a person who does their duty without moving in anger, fear or other. Where that the intellect goes with obscurity, and for this cause it is not possible to use. But I say to you that when he does not leave defeat in these mishaps and remains, still it will be a little difficult to remain secure.

Lep: bbut to what end is teaching, if it is difficult to do one's duty?

Gio: If teaching, that is to say if a courageous person waits on the occasion, so that they see experience in many which is rather timid and fearful. Nevertheless, in doing tricks made well, you will be able to see the occasion of doing one's duty, not if they can some serve.

Lep: I believe. When one loses the soul consequently they lose the art. But tell me, when it was one which has a question and for shortness of time are not able to impart all of the science of this art, that in an ordered earth, what in your opinion is good?

Gio: The practice in a single guard and to always parry with the true edge of the sword and to attack with the point.

Lep: And in which guard would one practice?

Gio: In the porta di ferro stretta accompanied with the guardia d'alicorno with the right foot forward. Because as all the attacks principally one guard and you are able to finish then in another. Still without doing this it is not possible, being that he is not able to throw a punta sopramano that does not have principally this said guard and that he does not finish in the porta di ferro. For this reason is necessary to serve so.

Lep: What is the cause of having elected the porta di ferro?

Gio: For two causes, the one is that one nearly does not have to defend the right side and the other is that this guard is born to great defense and offense. Being that one is able to defend from all attacks with a riverso and offend with a punta sopramano. As the parry with a riverso is more strong and more easy and the attack of the punta sopramano is more deadly and difficult to defend and these are the causes of this guard.

Lep: Tell me please the manner of parrying all attacks with said riverso that the enemy may throw and how to offend with the punta sopramano.

Gio: Of this I will mention the reasoning of defenses that are possible in the porta di ferro.

Lep: truly you have mentioned this but together with the other. Pero se non vi fosse molesto, desiderarei che hora ne ragionaste apartatamente, et che diceste la maniera del difendere con il detto riverso I colpi che il nemico tirar potesse, acció che meglio ne possa divenire capace.

Gio: I will reason this to please you. I say that in putting the hand to the sword, I want you to be strong in the guardia d'alicorno and as you come close to your opponent push an imboccata without stepping, the which stops in a porta di ferro stretta. This you will do not to attack but only as a provocation to throw, that is to say, to uncover having cause to respond.

Lep: But what if the enemy does not want to respond?

Gio: Move a little opposite their right side and in that movement return to the guardia d'alicorno and push an imboccata where he will make a strong response or retire back. But I want you in

that case where he responds with a mandritto to the head to make a small thrust forward of the left foot to the right side of the enemy and in that time parry the attack with a riverso squalibro stepping immediately with the right foot and pushing an imboccata to the chest which returns to said guard. But if the enemy wants to attack with a riverso to the head you will step with the left foot as I have said and defend with a riverso squalibro and immediately push forward the right foot and attack with an imboccata to the flank and the sword will go into the aforementioned guard. But if he responds with a riverso to the leg you will defend with a riverso ridoppio keeping the same order in stepping with the feet, pushing an imboccata to the face which goes into the previous guard. But when he pushes a punta sopra mano you will drive the left foot a little forward opposite his right side and defend with the true edge of the sword. Then you will run forward with the right foot and attack him in the chest with a similar thrust which returns to the guard you want. But in the case that he throws a stoccata to the face you will make a step with the feet as I have said and defend with a riverso squalibro thrusting forward immediately an imboccata to the flank and you will put yourself into the porta di ferro. These are the order of parrying and attacking in dui tempi, going to practice. Although practicing a little the parry and attack of a single time which is made always with a step to the right side of the enemy and the above I want you to practice well.

Lep: This order is pleasing to me. But tell me, if one does not know well, may one practice in another guard?

Gio: On the contrary, one knows well when he has the tempo, for all that is necessary. For if the enemy steps a little to your right side one must know which strength it is to change the guard.

Lep: And changing the guard, in which would I want to exercise?

Gio: In the coda lunga stretta because being strong in it one is able to parry all the attacks of the enemy with the true edge of the sword and attack with the thrust.

Lep: I am pleased with the reasoning of the porta di ferro; non vi sia grave ancora di ragionare di questa altra guardia, & dire il modo che egli deve tenere nel parare con il fil dritto della spada, & ferire di punta, che questo ancora mi sarà di grandissima sodidattione.

Gio: When one goes in the coda lunga stretta against the enemy and he throws a mandritto to the head, one is able to parry in the guardia di faccia making the left foot push the right forward. In the same time push a thrust to the face and immediately return to said guard. But when he turns a riverso to the head, one is able to go into the guardia d'entrare while stepping a little forward with the left foot and all in one time thrusting forward the right and pushing a thrust to the chest. Then put yourself into the aforementioned guard. But if he responds with a mandritto to the leg one is able to throw it back a little and pushing in that instant a thrust to the face and immediately return to the previous guard. But in the case that he pushes an imboccata one is able to parry with a mezzo mandritto and immediately thrust forward a punta riversa to the chest while making the left foot follow the right and immediately return to a reasoned guard. But when he throws a punta sopra mano one is able to defend with the true edge of the sword turning well the body behind the right side and attack with a punta riversa or go to encounter the enemy's sword with

the forte of the true edge turning well the body as I have said and in that time push a thrust to the chest accompanied with a reverso which returns one to the coda lunga stretta. These are the orders of being able to exercise in the aforementioned guard.

Lep: In how much time do I believe you that one learns this manner of parrying with the true edge of the sword and attacking with the point?

Gio: Second humanly. Because if one finds that learning quickly and those that learn late. Nevertheless I believe that one in one month or a little more may learn. But I do not believe that one that serves old can.

Lep: For what reason?

Gio: Because he does not have the practice of knowing the tempo. Which as I have said, is needed to acquire exercise with diversity. So that for this reason one is able to conclude that it is a rare thing, the acquisition of said practice of exercising only with a Maestro, for he is the end at teaching the science of the art, being this is his principle profession. And when he still exercises to make practice, in just a little time, there is a need that he knows a rare Maestro. Otherwise it may happen to them that it occurs to many which remain deceived being the authority of honor of fencing but never with others exercise than with a single Maestro. Where that he thinks he has frankness as they that beat with the hand having made that which the nature as said. And all proceeds because they have not the practice of knowing the use of the art and still because having lately all the end of the need to learn.

Lep: Now that I have an understanding of the reason and that I am assured of much, and of diverse opinion, that to me more time I remain in understanding of this art of fence. Sarà bene, che noi diamo luogo, & che domani piacendovi siamo insieme per ragionare delle armi accompagnate.

Gio: Most willingly and our reason will be given of the sword and dagger and following it will be the sword and cape, that is to say when one has good understanding of these different types and more necessary and that after they will have good practice and the possibility of going more easily in an understanding of all the others.

Lep: Io mi riporto a voi di quanto vi pare & piace.

La Quarta Giornata Del Primo Libro:

Nella qual si tratta della spada, & del pugnale.

The Fourth day of the first book: in which is discussed the sword and dagger.

Gio: