

# The MID-ATLANTIC SOCIETY For HISTORIC SWORDSMANSHIP

## A Curriculum for the German Longsword And Other Companion Weapons May, 2003; Revised September, 2006

### **PREFACE:**

This curriculum is based on the manuscript of 14<sup>th</sup> century German Master Johannes Liechtenauer, as interpreted in the commentary by Sigmund Ringeck, and embodied in the recent books Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship and Fighting with the German Longsword, both by Christian Tobler (Chivalry Bookshelf, 2001 and 2004).

The curriculum is designed to be progressive and cumulative, so that each lesson builds upon the previous one. Novice level includes Lessons 1 through 7, Intermediate level includes Lessons 8 through 10 and Advanced level includes Lessons 11 through 15.

### **LESSON 1. THEORETICAL BASIS:**

*Goal/Milestone: Understanding the basic theory of Longsword play and learning Larry's four "cardinal rules" of longsword (see below)*

- Merkeverse of Lichtenauer, the commentary by Ringeck, and the interpretation by Christian Tobler.
- Fluidity in motion: footwork, transitioning through the guards and the three wounders.
- Concepts of the Before and the After (Vor und Nach).
- The art of wounding: Cutting with Oberhau, Mittelhau, and Unterhau; Thrusting; Slicing with Oberschnitt and Unterschnitt
- Working from engagement, or the bind; the concepts of hard and soft.
- Close quarter combat.
- Hierarchy of defense.
  1. Attack before your opponent.
  2. Void the attack and counter-attack in time.
  3. Deflect the attack and immediately counter-attack.
  4. Static parry and immediately counter-attack.
  5. Void the attack without counter-attack.
  6. Static parry with flat or edge without counter-attack.
- Larry's four "cardinal rules" for longsword:
  1. If your sword is on your right side, lead with the left leg; and if your sword is on left side, lead with your right leg. Conversely, which ever your lead leg, make sure your sword is on the opposite side of your body.

2. As much as possible keep your sword in between your opponent's sword and your body.
3. As much as possible, keep the edge or tip of your sword threatening your opponent.
4. In moving, do not cross your feet.

## **LESSON 2. MOVEMENT**

*Goal/Milestone: Developing the ability to move with fluidity and stability in multiple directions.*

- The stance.
- Learning the principal footwork of passing steps, slope pace, gathering steps, compass steps.
- Learning the additional steps of transverse and change steps.
- Concepts regarding distance and measure.
- Concepts regarding timing and tempo.

## **LESSON 3. THE FOUR PRIMARY GUARDS (Vier Leger):**

*Goal/Milestone: Practicing the four primary guards until they become second nature, and understanding their tactical applications.*

- Holding the sword.
- Vom Tag (from the roof)
- Ochs (ox),
- Pflug (plow)
- Alber (fools)

## **LESSON 4. THE SECONDARY GUARDS:**

*Goal/Milestone: Practicing the four secondary guards until they become second nature, and understanding their tactical applications.*

- Langenort (long point)
- Schranckhut (barrier guard)
- Nebenhut (near guard, aka tail guard)
- Kron (the Crown)

### **LESSON 5. THE THREE WOUNDERS:**

*Goal/Milestones: Learning how to wound with cutting, thrusting, and slicing actions; and understanding the tactical applications of each. Developing the ability to move from defensive actions into attacks, while maintaining balance and fluidness in motion.*

- Understanding the four openings.
- Cutting Oberhau, Mittelhau, and Uberhau.
- Thrusting with the Sword
- Slicing with the Sword

### **LESSON 6. INITIATIVE:**

*Goal/Milestones: Understanding how to gain the initiative and regain it if you lose it.*

- Vor, Nach and Indes
- The concept of Fuhlen.

### **LESSON 7. DEFENDING WITH ATTACKS:**

*Goal/Milestones: Learning how to defend and counterattack in the same action.*

- Defenses from the right side.
- Defenses from the left side.

### **LESSON 8. THE FIVE MEISTERHAU (Master Strokes)**

*Goal/Milestone: Learning how to execute all five of the Meisterhau and understanding the tactical applications of each strike.*

- Zornhau (strike of wrath)
- Krumphau (crooked strike)
- Zwerchhau (cross strike)
- Schielhau (squinting strike)
- Scheitelhau (parting or scalp strike)

### **LESSON 9. THE SPRECHFENSTER (Speaking Window)**

*Goal/Milestone: Learning fuhlen with langentort, and learning to probe without contact with your opponent's blade.*

- Sprechfenster at the Sword
- Sprechfenster Disengaged

### **LESSON 10. THE EIGHT WINDINGS (Winden Techniques)**

*Goal/Milestone: Learning to fight off the bind, using the two hangers (high and low).*

- The windings from right ochs.
- The windings from left ochs.
- The windings from left pflug.
- The windings from right pflug.
- The three wounders and the eight windings.

### **LESSON 11. WRESTLING**

*Goal/Milestone: Learning the various unarmed combat techniques and their application to longsword.*

- Principles of medieval wrestling.
- The three wrestlings at the sword.

### **LESSON 12. ARMOURED COMBAT AND THE HALF-SWORD**

*Goal/Milestone: Learning to fight with the longsword in close measure.*

- The half-sword guards.
- Thrusting with the half-sword.
- Wrestling at the half-sword.
- Grabbing the sword.
- Disarming techniques.
- Pommel strikes.

### **LESSON 13. THE SPEAR**

*Goal/Milestone: Learning the use of the spear.*

- The three guards.
- Thrusting with the spear.
- Winding at the spear.

### **LESSON 14. THE DAGGER**

*Goal/Milestone: Learning the use of the dagger*

### **LESSON 15. SWORD AND BUCKLER**

*Goal/Milestone: Learning to fight with the single sword and buckler.*