

The MID-ATLANTIC SOCIETY For HISTORIC SWORDSMANSHIP

A Curriculum for the Italian Rapier September, 2006

PREFACE:

This curriculum is based on the 1606 treatise of Master Salvator Fabris, *De Lo Schermo overdo Scienza d'Arme*, specifically as translated and interpreted by Tom Leoni in his monumental book *Art of Dueling* (Chivlary Bookshelf, 2005).

The curriculum is designed to be progressive and cumulative, so that each lesson builds upon the previous one. Novice level includes Lessons 1 through 11, Intermediate level includes Lessons 12 through 15 and Advanced level includes Lessons 16 through 18.

LESSON 1. THEORETICAL BASIS

Goal/Milestone: Understanding the basic theory of the Rapier alone as presented by Fabris.

- Holding the rapier, and the four hand positions of prima, seconda, terza, and quarta.
- Understanding the weapon, the four parts of the rapier.
- Understanding the geometry of fencing.
- Understanding the mechanics of fencing.
- The advantage of the sword, taking your opponents sword, keeping your sword free
- The concept of misure (measure).
- The concept of tempo (timing).
- The union of forces.

LESSON 2. THE STANCE AND THE FOUR GUARDS

Goal/Milestone: Developing the proper stance and understanding counter-posture. Practicing the four rapier guards until they become second nature, and understanding their tactical applications.

- Prima; Fabris plates 1 and 2.
- Seconda; Fabris plates 3 through 8.
- Terza; Fabris plates 9 through 12.
- Quarta.; Fabris plates 13 through 20

LESSON 3. MOVEMENT AND FOOTWORK

Goal/Milestone: Learning the basic rapier footwork and developing the ability to move with quickness and stability.

- Pie Firma
- Learning the lunge.
- Learning the advance and retreat.
- Learning the pass.

LESSON 4. ATTACKING WITH THE THRUST

Goal/Milestone: Learning the two measure, learning how to take your opponent's rapier, learning to attack into each of the four openings with the thrust, and developing good point control.

- The two measures of misura larga and misura stretta.
- Being in presence.
- Thrusting to the inside with quarta.
- Thrusting to the outside with prima, seconda and terza

LESSON 5. THE PARRY AND RIPOSTE

Goal/Milestones: Learning this fundamental defense and counterattack.

- Parry and riposte attacks to the inside.
- Parry and riposte attacks to the outside.

LESSON 6. CUTTING WITH THE RAPIER

Goal/Milestones: Learning how to cut with the rapier and how to defend against cutting attacks.

- Target areas.
- Classification of cuts (defined by the direction of the cut).
- Parrying cuts, and voiding cutting attacks.

LESSON 7. ENGAGEMENTS AND THE CAVAZIONE

Goal/Milestones: Learning how to free your sword with the cavazione.

- Cavazione of tempo.
- Cavazione of obedience.
- Contracavazione.
- Ricavazione.
- Mezza cavazione (Half-cavazione)

LESSON 8. THE FEINT AND THE INVITATION

Goal/Milestones: Learning how to properly execute feints and invitations, and proper attacks therefrom.

- Defining feints and invitations.
- Performing feints and invitations, and learning to attack after executing the same.

LESSON 9. THE VOIDS

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

- Voids against attacks to the inside, the Girata of the right and the left foot.
- Voids against attacks to the outside using the passing step, and the lunge.
- Studying Fabris plates 18, 19, and 20.

LESSON 10. THE BEAT, YIELDING

Goal/Milestone: Learning how perform beats against your opponent's blade and learning how to thwart them when performed against you.

- Executing the beat.
- Deceiving the beat with the cavazione.

LESSON 11. THE HAND PARRIES

Goal/Milestone: Learning the four hand parries.

- Hand parries against attacks to the inside.
- Hand parries against attacks to the outside.

LESSON 12. TECHNIQUES FOR WOUNDING YOUR OPPONENT

Goal/Milestone: Exploring the tactical aspects of the rapier alone,

- Studying Fabris' plates 21 through 48.

LESSON 13. THE DAGGER

Goal/Milestone: Learning the general manner in which the rapier is used with the dagger.

- The postures and counter-postures.
- Finding the sword.
- Left leg forward versus right leg forward.
- The rapier and dagger guards; exploring Fabris' plates 49 through 70.
- The dagger parries.

LESSON 14. THE DAGGER PLAYS

Goal/Milestone: Learning to fight with the rapier and dagger.

- Exploring Fabris' plates 71 through 95.

LESSON 15. THE RAPIER AND CAPE

Goal/Milestone: Learning to fight with the rapier and cape.

- General theory of the use of rapier and cape.
- Exploring Fabris' plates 97 through 108.

LESSON 16. PROCEEDING WITH RESOLUTION

Goal/Milestone: Learning how to attack without stopping.

- Rule One.
- Rule Two.
- Rule Three.
- Rule Four.
- Rule Five
- Rule Six.

LESSON 17. RESOLUTION WITH RAPIER AND DAGGER

Goal/Milestone: Learning how to attack with rapier and dagger without stopping.

- Rule One.
- Rule Two.
- Rule Three.
- Rule Four.

LESSON 18. SPECIAL TECHNIQUES

Goal/Milestone: Learning what remains in the Fabris system.

- Grips and Disarms.
- Cape Throws.
- Defending against a dagger empty handed.
- Defending with a sword against a polearm.