

The Philosophy of Italian Rapier...

or...

How to learn from the manuals

Ld Friedrich Wilhelmssohn
at Studium Generale, Boferrach, Kingdom of the Outlands

1. Introduction

1. This is Italian Rapier.

1. Primacy of the Point over the Cut
2. Salvatore Fabris, Ridolfo Capo Ferro, Nicoletto Gigante NOT Sidesword, Marozzo, diGrassi, Silver, Saviolo, etc.

2. Why study?

1. People back then were not stupid.
2. It was a matter of life and death to them
3. They developed complete systems of fence optimized to the weapons and conditions of the day.

3. What we hope to achieve.

1. Help you to learn from manuals.
2. Not to teach you a specific style today.
 1. Why not? - Not enough time. To get down the basics would take a full weekend seminar at minimum.

4. How are we going to do this?

1. Common Pitfalls
2. Mindset or “Philosophy” of the Italian rapier fencer including some Terminology & Definitions
3. Details

2. Body of the class

1. Pitfalls

1. It's just a bag of tricks. I'll pick and choose what works for me.
 1. Wrong, it's a Complete system
 1. counter example – Antonio Quintino
 2. Example, brown belt in taekwondo tries aikido
2. I'll just look at the plates
 1. Plate only shows a slice in time, not the actions
 2. If you don't read the text you won't understand the reasons/strengths/etc.
 3. Multiple descriptions/plays for each plate
3. The plates are just approximations, I'll do it my way because it's more comfortable for me.
 1. Great expense was gone to to make the plates as accurate as the technology of the day allowed.
 2. Fabris' Manual was the first Copper Engraved book in Denmark
 3. Subtle variations can be discerned in the plates and can make great differences in your effectiveness.
4. Modern Fencing is Better.

1. Yes. If you are using a modern weapon and modern conditions.
5. That Can't Be Right. Everybody knows that...
 1. The thing everybody knows is dependent on conditions and the rest of the system.
 2. Complete system, different parts support each other.
 3. Front leg example, Head coverage in lunge example

2. Mindset

1. Defensive – Rule One is “Stay alive”. Rule Two is “Incapacitate your opponent”.
2. Measure - Distance
 1. Out of – Can't wound without moving the back foot
 2. Wide – Can wound with a movement of the front foot
 3. Narrow – Can wound without moving a foot
 4. Changing measure
 1. Small changes
 2. Best not to move at same time as your opponent.
 5. Don't forget, the measure may be different for you and your opponent
3. Position
 1. Many ways to form guards
A fourth guard is still a fourth guard, be it high, low, transverse, etc. However, different ways of forming the guard have different results
 2. Gaining the sword
 1. More of your sword past the crossing
 2. Sword is stronger on the side to which it points
 3. NOT Touching
 4. Gaining the Sword is: Always good, but not always necessary
4. Tempo
 1. A tempo – Unit of time it takes to do something (only if in measure)
 2. Opponent does something, this takes a tempo, in which you can do something.
 3. A tempo implies an opportunity to wound
 4. Stesso Tempo vs. Dui Tempi vs. Mezzo Tempo (gives a tempo/takes the tempo)

3. Details

1. Weight on the Balls of feet. NOT Heels
2. Smoothness counts. “Push a thrust” don't “Throw a Shot”
3. Don't parry, It's submissive. Stesso tempo counter instead. If the shit has hit the fan, parry while retreating out of measure. Then start over again with seeking the measure
4. Don't start the assault too close together, seeking the measure is a very important part of the fight
5. Cavazione – two types
 1. In tempo – Is an Attack – Move forward in the same tempo – to deny your opponent the opportunity to dui tempi parry-repost
 2. Of Submission – is a pure defense – retreat in the same tempo - to gain time

4. Sources

1. Fabris - Art of Dueling – Tommaso Leoni – Available on Amazon
2. Capo Ferro
 1. Published translation is out of print
 2. Online → Wikipedia → Ridolfo Capoferro → Links