

The following is a translation of Books I and II (of three) of *Dell'Arte di Scrimia* by Giovanni dall'Agocchie (1572).

All annotation is in boldface and bracketed as follows:

- 1) Page numbers of the original are given in square brackets, e.g. [36recto] indicates the approximate beginning of page 36 recto.
- 2) Marginalia are presented in wavy brackets, e.g. {*Why fencing is the foundation of the military art.*}, likewise in approximately their original placements (albeit in the body of the translation as opposed to in the margins).
- 3) My own comments are in angular brackets, e.g. <i.e. your sword's—"di essa">. These are provided chiefly in order to clarify or specify something that was not made explicit in its particular instance or context but was nonetheless unambiguous owing to original grammatical inflection, earlier reference, or other context; or to indicate an error or inconsistency in the layout or didactic structure of the original (e.g. when a provocation is described, then its counter is given while misstating the nature of the original provocation). I have tried to be conservative with respect to this latter class of annotation.

I would like to thank my friend the esteemed Gordon Frye for his explanation of various technical elements of the joust and its equipment. Any errors on this topic are doubtlessly due to misconstrual on my part.

Finally I direct the reader's attention to the copyright statement below. I would like to clarify that research and study constitute fair use, and I invite anyone to reproduce and use the current text, provided that a) this page remains attached to it, and b) that it not be reproduced in part or whole, by itself or as part of a larger work, for sale or otherwise for financial gain without my prior written consent.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

All rights reserved. Copyright Nov. 24, 2007 by William Jherek Swanger. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted by any means or in any form, electronic or mechanical, without prior written consent of the author/translator, subject to Fair Use in the Copyright Act of the United States of America.

**ON THE ART OF FENCING
THREE BOOKS
BY M. GIOVANNI DALL'AGOCCHIE
BOLOGNESE**

**Which briefly deal with: The art of Fencing.
 The joust;
 Battle array.**

**A WORK NECESSARY
For Captains, Soldiers, and any Gentleman whatsoever.**

WITH PRIVILEGE.

IN VENICE,
Printed by Giulio Tamborino. MDLXXII.

[2recto] TO THE VERY ILLUSTRIOUS LORD,
The Lord Count Fabio Pepoli, Count of Castiglione, my Lord and always very observant patron.

The knowledge that since your tender years your illustrious Lordship has greatly delighted in the virtue that pertains to an honored Knight, and the spirit that I have always had to serve you and do you gracious things, have often made me desire to be able to make some sign thereof unto you. Accordingly, having now decided to publish the present work, I have determined that it will carry with it the honored name of your Illustrious Lordship. I present it to you thus, not in order to even with you via this humble gift the debt that I owe you, which is so far beyond the reach of my feeble abilities, but to leave you with some testimony of my adoring servitude. Whence I entreat your Illustrious Lordship to accept it kindly and with the unique courtesy **[2verso]** that I have always recognized in the singular goodness of your soul, so that I may place this debt alongside the infinite others that I owe you. And with reverent kisses to the hand of your Illustrious Lady, I pray unto our Lord God that He deigns to grant you the fullness of all your wishes.

Your Illustrious Lordship's

Very dear servant,

Giovanni dall'Agocchie.

[3recto] Preface by Messer Giovanni dall'Agocchie, Bolognese, to his book on the art of fencing.

It has always been esteemed laudable to be of use and to do good deeds to others. In consideration whereof, I resolved to reduce into a brief treatise as much of the understanding and practice of the art of fencing as I have been able to learn and put to the test over many years. Nor could this proposal elude me, seeing that many excellent men have widely written upon this topic, since they have failed to speak of some things which may be among the most important to know. And because this art is difficult to describe in a way that can be understood well, one may still come to deal with it anew as it may always be further elucidated.

As fencing is the chief part of military exercises, one sees that it is conclusively necessary to men. Given that in times of war we wish to have use of it, what may be more convenient to us? And among bodily exercises, which is more noble and illustrious than this one? And since a man may be constrained and forced by the circumstances of war to exert himself therein, then for what reason wouldn't anyone seek [3verso] to have a full understanding of this beautiful and useful profession? I am silent regarding those bouts of honor which are called "duels", in which no one may account for himself honorably, should he be wholly ignorant of this.

In consequence whereof I do not hold these discourses of mine to have turned out to be useless. I have composed them in the form of a dialogue for their more ready understanding by whomever in whose hands they arrive. In precisely that fashion did it pass that I had discussions thereof in Brescia, in the house of the very illustrious Signore Girolamo Martimenghi, with Messer Lepido Ranieri, a youth of a sensible and virtuous bearing, who well understands the practice of fencing. After many discussions with him, both of us being led to the garden, he began to speak thus:

[4recto] THE FIRST BOOK OF DIALOGUES by Messer Giovanni dall'Agocchie, Bolognese: which deal with the art of Fencing; divided into five days.

INTERLOCUTORS: M. Lepido Ranieri and M. Giovanni dall'Agocchie.

Lep. Messer Giovanni, since this great heat is bothering us and will keep us from accomplishing anything for several hours, it would seem like a good idea to discuss the art of fencing to keep us from falling asleep, and so that I could derive some instruction from your speech.

Gio. Certainly, my Messer Lepido. Since I see your wits to be awakened to virtue, I would fully satisfy you in that which you ask of me. And so that I may, don't refrain from asking me freely, and I will strive to please you with all I know and value, so that I may satisfy you insofar as I can.

Lep. I truly had the same faith in you, and am endlessly very grateful to you for yours. And since you place it in me, by your leave I'll speak of my ideas in order to arrive confidently at the truth. My desire would be for you to make me understand everything

that you know about this exercise, and to clear up every doubt that may occur to me, [4verso] since I know that you know how to do so, and can do it readily.

Gio. My M. Lepido, you honor me much more than I merit, and I don't know whether I'll be able to satisfy all your expectations once put to the test. Nonetheless, so that you may understand how much love I hold for you, and wish to do for you, begin to explain your intent to me, and I will promptly attend to your every demand.

Lep. I have striven with all my power and employed all diligence to understand the discussions of men of arms regarding fencing. But I have heard so many, and always such differing opinions on the topic, that I've been unable to achieve my intent, although I fixed my mind upon it, greatly clouded and inflamed with the desire to understand it. Never before was an occasion presented to me to be able to do so as there is now, whence I hope by your means to be fully satisfied therein. Accordingly, I wish to know whether in the art of fencing a fixed rule can be given that can direct a man to its true understanding.

Gio. To tell the truth, ever since my childhood under the discipline of the finest Masters up until this time I have always sought to know it. But owing to the differences (as you say) that I see there, and because of the low esteem in which it is held, I discuss it unwillingly. Nonetheless, as I've been sought out by you, whom I greatly wish to satisfy, and must, I will give my opinion in part.

Lep. I ask rather that you give it in full since the amplenness of time permits it. And first, how did it emerge that such a worthy art should be held in such low esteem?

{Why the art of fencing is so little valued.}

Gio. Regarding this question, as various persons speak variously about it, I'm among those who hold the opinion that it arises [5recto] for no other reason than that many, unaware that this art of fencing is the origin and foundation of the military art (and deriving this name from "trifle", as it is commonly held) take no care to learn it, and disdain it as irrelevant to their profession.

Lep. Explain to me, I pray you, the reason why it's the foundation of the military art.

{Why fencing is the foundation of the military art.}

Gio. One can interpret this name in a general or in a particular sense. In general, for any sort of militia. In particular, for one-on-one combat. But any time that it's not expressed otherwise, one must take it to refer to one-on-one combat. In general, then, (as I told you) one takes it to refer to any sort of militia, since the military art consists of nothing other than in judiciously and prudently defending oneself from the enemy and harming him, whether in the cities, or in the armies, or in any other place; because this word "fencing" means nothing other than defending oneself with a means of harming the enemy. Thus it is clear that it can be taken generally for every kind of combat.

But taking it specifically, for one-on-one combat, it is manifest that it is part of, or rather a ladder and guide to, the art of war, as many times it is necessary to employ this

art in defense of one's own life, as in those examples which one reads in so many histories, and sees every day. Therefore I tell you that one cannot be grounded nor perfect in the art of the militia who doesn't have this portion, considering that nothing is called perfect whenever one owes to or can add to it; and if one has to add to the art of combat the knowledge of how to defend his own person, which is indeed its fundamental principle, then he, lacking this art, will never be able to be called "perfect."

This is the principle that I owe to you, which I will prove via its nobility, [5verso] which must be preferred above all else. And I say (leaving aside spiritual matters for now) that even as the human body is nobler than all other things, thus one must rationally learn to defend it before the city and the armies, as these were ordained for human defense. And needing to place one's self among any sort of militia, one will necessarily have to provide that for any occasion. Nor should you believe that this assertion of mine conflicts with that great philosopher Solon, who wished that one must place the defense of his own country before his own life, for he did not mean by this the material country, built of stone, but rather that assembly of men for whom the material city was built.

Now, these who defend themselves against their enemies, simultaneously beating aside their insolence instead with art and mastery, are properly said to be protecting themselves when it comes to pass that they utterly save themselves and the republic.

And in this action prudence holds the chief place. While on the contrary, whoever faces his enemy's fury without art or mastery, always ending up rashly overcome, finds himself not defended, but rather derided for it. Accordingly, if you do not grant prudence a place of honor, rather holding it in no esteem, then this art, which is founded and based on prudence, will usually be seen to hold little value for you.

Lep. Your answer pleases me greatly. Nonetheless, it doesn't relieve me of every trouble of my spirit, since at times we've seen inexpert people, without experience or any understanding of fencing, to have overcome and defeated those who have. Whereas if your arguments were true, it would follow [6recto] that one skilled in this art would always emerge superior to one inexpert.

Gio. To this difficulty, Meser Lepido, one can reply in more ways than one. One is that one particular incident does not render a universal rule invalid. The other is that the defeat that was suffered by those whom you say to be professors of this exercise was not made by them as fencers, seeing as how it is impossible that they, as such, were defeated. But it can indeed happen to them as lazy, unjust, or base persons, and then they cease to be fencers, and are soon wounded. {*Components that one looks for in the good fencer.*} Because many components are looked for in a good fencer, and far more so in one who conducts himself to combat, such as: reason, boldness, strength, dexterity, knowledge, judgment, and experience. And beyond these and other such, the divine judgment intervenes over all, secret to and hidden from us.

Lep. It seems to me that the confusion in your argument stems from this conclusion of

yours. Because every time that a combatant is agile and courageous and undertakes to resolve a just enterprise, he will be the victor, and if the opposite, the loser. Whence it follows that the art is therefore unnecessary.

Gio. Slow down, Meser Lepido, because the terms in which my response will proceed will make you understand that the art is indeed necessary. Leaving aside as a special case that sometimes God allows the opposite, I tell you as an infallible rule that everyone can refuse the aid available to him, and that God has given us the sense to tell good from bad. This being the case, it will also be clear that if someone doesn't want to defend himself or take action, then he'll emerge the loser for it, although he may have been in the right. And this is because he refused his own aid, for which he can only blame himself. Nor can you deny to me the necessity of the provision which derives from the art of fencing, as [6verso] I'll tell you now.

I believe that when one is in the right, and has the spirit and strength to defend it, joined to this art, then he will most often be the victor, and in this, your argument holds. But when he renounces his own aid by not wanting to learn how to defend himself, the opposite comes to pass, for which he himself is to be blamed. So, to conclude, one who is partly lacking in boldness and strength needs the art as the necessary repairer of these deficiencies. Because with it, one increases his spirit and accustoms himself to labor, and becomes as judicious and perceptive in the advantage of arms as in the rest.

Lep. From your distinction, M. Giovanni, arises another doubt, namely that it is nature that is at work, and not art, because it is from nature that spirit, strength, bodily disposition, and being in the right proceed. Nothing else being required, art is of little or no use to us.

Gio. In this regard you have to consider that nature can render a body quite well suited and disposed to this exercise, and furnished with useful spirit and strength. But don't ever deny to me that it is always necessary to cautiously provide these qualities, via every means favorable to such an enterprise, to some who do not know for certain that they possess them (as the majority find of themselves). Beyond which, as nature produces things with both good and bad, although someone may possess the aforementioned attributes, nonetheless if he doesn't understand them he won't be able to avail himself of them if he lacks judgment, which is acquired by means of the art. And although he knows how to throw mandritti, roversi, and thrusts, nonetheless he could employ them to his favor as well as to his detriment. Which art, imitator of nature, keeps in mind, seeking to make him conscious and intelligent with proof and practice.

And it may be, for example, [7recto] that nature grants words to men, and that they speak by nature; yet if they are not aided by the art of elocution, they will never know how to form their reasoning in accord with the occasions and times that are presented to them. Similarly, by nature men have voices, and sing. Nonetheless, they will never sing with reason unless music is provided to them. And the horse is strong by nature, and suited to battle, yet the horseman will never be able to avail himself of its use

unless it has been previously tamed with reason, and made accustomed to handling, and obedient to his every wish. Just so is the experience that one chiefly sees when every man, however courageous he may be, once challenged by someone, meets with some capable man who instructs him and makes him practice before he reaches the day of the duel. And this is for no other reason than that when he sees that he has need of it, evidently he recognizes how necessary it is. And if those who hold the opposite to be true ever came to combat, they would realize how deeply they erred. I believe that what I have said regarding this topic will suffice for now.

Lep. You have resolved these doubts in such a manner and with such effective reasoning that I no longer doubt the dignity of this art. And since you've discussed sufficiently about the need that anyone may have of it, I hope it won't vex you to tell me the method and the principle one must follow in order to learn it.

{Theory and practice, foundations of the arts.}

Gio. Now that we are so far advanced, I don't want to refrain from telling you all of my opinions on this. You know, then, that all the liberal arts are comprised of theory and practice. Likewise is it so for this one, and both theory and practice must be considered. The [7verso] theory of the art of fencing teaches with reason the ways to defend oneself and harm the enemy. The practice, then, is that which one acquires from familiarity with its operation, that is, by long use and continuous practice.

But some Masters of this art direct it toward bad ends, because not realizing that theory and practice are different, as soon as they possess a bit of theory, they set themselves to teach; which occurs only because the ancient custom of the creation of Masters has fallen into oblivion. And know that, not long ago, even as when someone had to attain the excellent degree of a doctorate, and that first a diligent examination of his knowledge was performed, and then if it was judged sufficient, that the privilege would be granted to him; just so was it observed by Masters of fencing. For first they would examine one who wanted to teach others, to determine whether he knew the theory of fencing and all the other things necessary to it. And then they set a scholar facing him, making him throw blows badly, and place himself in guard poorly, and this was done in order to learn whether he recognized what the scholar was deficient in. After this, they put him to the test with various good scholars, whereupon, if he were sufficiently successful, he was granted privileges by the other Masters, and with his patents he was able to open a school. And these were authentic Masters, something truly worthy of such an art, because it should not be permitted for someone to teach that in which he had not been sufficiently instructed.

Lep. They do a great evil, who, to their guilt, lack good customs.

Gio. This is a defect born of time, which corrupts everything eventually, and of the Masters as well, who allow the validity of their privileges to be nullified. But to continue the discussion we began, I say that now it's entirely the opposite, because [8recto] many

are seen who work as Masters, and teach whatever their learning in the trade may be. Therefore, those for whom it turns out badly have only themselves to blame, since they let the discipline be brought down by such deeds. Because (as I said) it is one thing to know, and another to teach. The difference is plain; because one who only has practice is good for laboring for himself; but he who has theory is good for others; and he who has both theory and practice is good for himself and others. And such were those who were authentically made Masters.

Lep. Now that I've heard of the excellence of this art and see that the chief part of it is founded in theory, I'd be happy to know its nature and the way to learn it.

{Art of fencing has six headings.}

Gio. This is based on and divided into six principal headings. And the first one is knowing which edge is the true one and which is the false when you have to employ the sword. Second, how many ways it can wound. Third, the nature of the guards, and especially of the most important ones. Fourth, the way to step in them. Fifth, when you're in any of the said guards whatsoever, how you can defend yourself from all of your enemy's blows, and harm him. Sixth and last, having an understanding of the straits of the half sword, and of time along with it.

Lep. Now I recognize how different this way is from others, and how much easier it is to derive results from it. Now continue, and tell me the entirety at length, heading by heading, so that our discussion isn't without profit.

Gio. Regarding the first one, as for the true edge, every time you grip your sword, whether in your right or left hand, the edge that faces toward the middle knuckle of your hand will be the true edge, and conversely, the other one will be the false one. So much for the first heading.

[8verso] Second, the sword can wound in three ways, namely by the mandritto, by the roverso, and by the thrust. However, the mandritto is divided into five types, the roverso into five other similar ones, and the thrust into three.

Lep. Don't refrain from telling me how these types agree with each other, nor what they are.

{Blows are of multiple sorts.}

Gio. All blows must be either mandritti, roversi, or thrusts. But each of them has natures additional to these, according to the varieties of how they are delivered. Because the mandritto will be either fendente, squalibro, tondo, ridoppio, or tramazzone; and the roverso will likewise be of the same qualities as above. The thrust, then, is divided into three types, namely imboccata, stoccata, and punta riversa.

Lep. Before you pass further on, tell me why you give these names to blows, and what

they are.

{Mandritto.}

Gio. The mandritto is called that because it originates on the right side; and it is called “fendente” because it cleaves from the head to the feet in a straight line. **{Sgualimbros.}** But one calls that mandritto “sgualimbros” that goes through diagonally, that is, from the adversary’s left shoulder to his right knee. **{Tondo.}** The tondo, or traverso, is the name of the one that turns crosswise. **{Ridoppio.}** Ridoppio is that which departs from beneath with the true edge of the sword and finishes at the point of the enemy’s right shoulder. **{Tramazzone.}** Tramazzone is that which is done with the wrist in the manner of a little wheel.

{Riverso.} But riversi are named such because they are the opposite of the dritti, beginning on the left side and ending on the right. And they are similar to the mandritti, that is, of the same types.

{Thrusts.} But coming to the thrusts, **{Imbroccata.}** that which is done overhand is called imbroccata, **{Stoccata.}** and that which is done underhand, stoccata; **{Punta riversa.}** and that which issues from the left side, punta riversa. And this will do for the second heading.

Lep. Can’t one wound with the false edge of the sword?

Gio. Yes, but rarely, because the false edge is used more for parrying than for [9recto] wounding. It is indeed true that this can also be divided into multiple types, however two are the most necessary, namely the falso dritto and the falso manco.

{Falso dritto and manco.} The falso dritto will proceed from your right side, going from low to high along the line of the mandritto. Ridoppio falso manco will proceed from your left side, going from low to high along the line of the riverso ridoppio. And this will do for the falso.

Lep. I’ve followed these two heading completely. Following your order, it now remains for you to mention of the guards.

Gio. Coming to the guards now, I’ll tell you that there are a lot of them, both low and high, **{There are eight guards which are the most important.}** but there are eight that are the most important, four high and four low. Of the low ones, two are done with the right foot forward, and two with the left. And they have two names, namely coda lunga and porta di ferro.

{Coda lunga.} Coda lunga will be when the sword is held outside of your right side, and it is divided into two different guards, one of which is called coda lunga stretta, and the other alta. Coda lunga stretta is that which is done with the right foot forward, and coda lunga alta with the left foot, always holding the sword outside of the right side with the arm will extended and near the knee on the outside, and with the point aimed at the enemy. This is named so on account of its similarity to great men, who are

perpetually accompanied by many people, and hence one hears the common proverb, “beware of those who have the long tail”, that is, that have a following. And likewise one needs to beware of this guard, because it has the long tail.

{Porta di ferro.} The second is called porta di ferro, owing to its similarity to an iron gate, which takes a lot of effort and skill to batter down. Just so, to wound someone positioned in this guard requires skill and wit. This is similarly divided into two types, the one called porta di ferro and the other **[9verso]** cinghiale.

The first porta di ferro is when you have the right foot forward and the sword, with your fist, aimed at the enemy. But cinghiale porta di ferro is when you have the left foot forward and on the diagonal, that is, toward your left side, and the sword hand near the left knee on the inside; and the right shoulder facing the enemy. It is named thus by comparison with the boar, or wild pig as we say, which, when it is attacked, approaches with its tusks on the diagonal in order to wound. And these are the low guards.

Lep. I would be grateful to know, since you’ve called one of the guards “coda lunga stretta,” whether one could similarly apply “porta di ferro stretta” to one of the others.

Gio. They are called stretta, lunga, and alta, because this guard can be formed in three ways, and likewise with coda lunga. But to keep things brief, I hadn’t intended to mention the others, and had contented myself for now for you to have understood porta di ferro and coda lunga, with the right foot as well as the left foot forward, there being little difference between the two. But since you appear so curious to know everything, I’ll tell you.

Every time that you have your right foot forward one pace, which will be neither large nor small, but proportionate, with the sword hand on the inside near the right knee, and the point thereof aimed at the enemy, **{Porta di ferro stretta, and larga.}** This will be named porta di ferro stretta; and it was named “stretta” for being a very secure guard. But if you distance your hand from your knee somewhat, toward your left side, lowering the point toward the ground a bit, it will be called porta di ferro larga, because it makes the body greatly uncovered. And being in porta di ferro larga, if you raise the sword hand somewhat, this will be **[10recto]** porta di ferro alta, through being higher than the other two. And this, which I’ve said about porta di ferro, can equally be said about the guard cinghiale porta di ferro.

Now I said above that the guard of coda lunga is also divided into three types. **{Coda lunga of three types.}** The first is done with the right foot forward toward your right side, and the sword hand on the outside and near the right knee, and with the point and body facing the enemy; and it is called coda lunga stretta, also on account of being a narrow and very secure guard. The second, when, being in coda lunga stretta, you draw your hand and sword back somewhat, holding the point low, will be called coda lunga larga, and is named such because the sword is distanced further from the enemy. The third, being in coda lunga larga, turning the point of the sword to the rear, is called coda lunga distesa, and it also took this name from coda lunga because the sword is extended backwards. Three guards can be formed with the left foot forward, namely coda lunga

alta, coda lunga larga, and coda lunga distesa, and they are named such for the aforesaid reasons.

Lep. Meser Giovanni, I do not yet regret my curiosity, since it has led me to learn from you more than I had planned, thanks to your kindness. Therefore continue onwards with your discussion.

Gio. Regarding the high guards, *{Guard and its types.}* the first is called guardia d'alicorno, and is recognized when the handle is turned entirely down, and the arm is well extended, and the point somewhat low, which is aimed at the face or breast of the enemy, in a manner similar to the unicorn, which, being attacked, fights in that manner with its horn.

The second is called guardia di testa, which is when one holds the arm well extended toward the enemy's face, and the sword on the diagonal, that is, so that its point goes toward **[10verso]** your left side, and somewhat towards the ground, and it is called that because it protects the upper parts.

The third is called guardia di faccia, and is seen when the arm is well extended with the palm of the hand turned upwards, and the true edge of the sword facing inward, that is, toward the left side, and the point together with the right flank must face toward the enemy's face. This is called such, because it guards the face excellently.

The fourth will be called guardia d'entrare, which is done the opposite of the previous one, that is, one holds the arm and the sword extended, still at the enemy's face, but the palm faces down and the true edge of the sword has to face outward, that is, toward the right side, and the body must have its right side turned somewhat toward the enemy. It is named thus because it is a very strong guard for entering.

These four guards can be done in two ways, namely with either the right or the left foot forward. And so much for the third heading.

Lep. Now I'd like to know whether there are other high guards in use beyond these. Could you mention any?

Gio. There remain three of them that I thought it desirable to discuss with you, so that you'd have information about all of them.

The first is called guardia alta and is seen when the handle of the sword faces upward with the arm well extended, and the point is turned toward the rear, and this is named on account of being the highest one that can be formed.

The second one is done with the sword over the left arm. And the third, underneath, making the point face toward the rear, and they retain the same name.

But having already dealt with the guards sufficiently, in this fourth heading we'll discuss stepping in them.

Lep. I'll be grateful for this. But first I want to know, regarding these guards that you've already discussed, **[11recto]** which you've named in various ways, whether you

could designate them otherwise, and for what reason they're named as they are. Why have I heard differing opinions about this so many times?

Gio. You must know that such names were applied to the guards by the ancients, and then confirmed by moderns through their use. And they are understood by such and accepted, if not by all, then by at least the greater part of those whose eyes are open to the art. It's not that they couldn't be named otherwise, but introducing new names to ears accustomed to earlier ones wouldn't be anything but a profitless annoyance, and a change devoid of benefit. It's true that anyone can form them in his own way, as long as he is understood. But following the accepted rule and the practice of the majority, we'll leave them as we've found them.

Lep. Since you've satisfied me with respect to the names given to the guards and the reasons for them, following the order taken, I hope that you'll provide me with understanding of the way to step in them.

{Stepping in the guards: how it is done.}

Gio. One steps with reason and art, and goes in all the guards to find the adversary. This can be done by beginning with either foot, on the diagonal or having one foot drive the other forward, according to the time and the need. Nonetheless, stepping with a pace neither large nor small is of greater utility, because thereby you can both advance forward and retire back without bodily discomfort, always accompanying the hand with the foot.

But you must be advised that the forward leg must be a bit bent at the knee, and its foot must point straight toward the enemy; and the rear leg will be a bit curved and with its foot somewhat on the diagonal, in such a manner that every movement will be full of grace. And so much for the fourth heading.

Lep. I would dearly appreciate it if you were to present to me better the way that one must follow in stepping in the said guards with the sword in hand, which I haven't heard enough of.

Gio. Suppose you have your sword at your left side, in the act of laying hand upon it, and the heel of your right foot near your left one. Both your knees will be straight and not bowed, arranging yourself with as much grace as possible. Having done this, you'll put your right foot forward toward your right side, and in that tempo you'll extend your arm and do a falso, and a riverso squalibro; or do two riversi, the first tondo and the second likewise squalibro; thereby going with your sword into coda lunga stretta. And from here you'll step forward with your left foot toward your left side, doing a falso and mandritto squalibro in that instant, and the sword will fall into cinghiale porta di ferro. And then you'll go forward one pace with your right foot, and in that tempo you'll turn a dritto tramazzone, which will end in porta di ferro stretta. Then you'll advance with your left foot, doing a falso, and a riverso squalibro, and the sword will go into coda lunga alta. Then you'll step forward with your right foot and in the same tempo you'll throw a riverso ridoppio, stopping the sword in guardia d'alicorno. And being fixed in the said

guard you'll drive an imbroccata without any taking any step, and the sword will stop in porta di ferro stretta.

From here you'll withdraw your right foot a pace, and all in one tempo you'll execute a falso and a riverso squalimbri, and the sword will return to coda lunga alta. Then you'll draw your left foot back, and next turn a mandritto tramazzone, which will end in porta di ferro stretta. Then you'll return your right foot back a pace, turning a dritto tramazzone in that tempo, with which you'll fall [12recto] into cinghiale porta di ferro. And from here, you'll draw the left foot back, doing a falso and riverso squalimbri in that instant, and the sword will return to coda lunga stretta, and thus you'll be returned to the same place with the same guards.

Lep. Why do you want me to step forward, and then return backwards?

Gio. Because you get good practice in changing guards as much forward as back, which is necessary in the art, and of very great utility; and so that you understand, this stepping is one of the chief things that you must practice if you want to have grace with weapons in hand.

Lep. It seems to me that I've been well informed about all the blows that can be thrown with the sword, and of the guards with their names, and of the manner that one must observe in assuming them and in stepping in them. There now remain the fifth and six headings. As they are more important, I don't want to burden you by discussing them at as much length as you can, in particular regarding the unaccompanied sword, and then, if there's time, with other arms.

Gio. Nothing about that bothers me, and I hope to be able to please you in this. But it seems to me that the hour is late, and the discussion won't be a brief one, so I believe it would be proper to defer it until tomorrow.

Lep. Let's do as you wish.

THE SECOND DAY OF THE FIRST BOOK:

In which fencing with the unaccompanied sword is discussed.

Gio. Since yesterday, my Meser Lepido, I couldn't do as you wished, owing to the lack of time, I'll try to do so today, speaking to you of the unaccompanied sword. And it's convenient for us to deal with this first and then with the other arms, since it is reasonably placed before all others [12verso] as the principal, most necessary, and most important arm, which we can legitimately say to reign, by virtue of being the ladder and guide, and foundation of all of fencing.

Lep. I've learned that this has always been held in the greatest esteem, which I hadn't previously known, with so much preeminence over other arms as to take away the prize. I'd like to hear some reason for that.

{Unaccompanied sword: why it is preferred to the other arms.}

Gio. The principal reasons why the sword is preferred to other arms are that, first, there being nothing in the world more highly prized than honor, which consists in knowing how to conduct yourself virtuously, if someone comes to be placed in doubt through opposition or villainous undertakings, or some shortcoming, he must defend it with his own valor, and the other must legitimize his assertion. And one sees how apt the unaccompanied sword is for doing this. Because those who appear most courageous and of greatest valor in the most resolute duels appear in shirts with the unaccompanied sword. And thereby they show the most manifest proof, more confident in reason and their own virtue than in other covering or the company of arms, either offensive or defensive. And almost all the understanding is founded upon the unaccompanied sword, and in it one comprehends the entirety of fencing, and all the other arms depend upon it. And whoever has knowledge of it can easily have knowledge of all the others, although not so for the converse. Beyond which, the unaccompanied sword is accepted everywhere, and is used more, and can be had more easily, but this does not occur with the others. Whence this arm is reasonably preferred to all the others.

Lep. Your explanations are so true and sufficient that I remain silent and content about them. But before we pass onwards, I'd like to know about what many say, namely that the fencing that is in use now is very different from that of antiquity, and that this is something else compared to [13recto] that.

Gio. I believe that they who say so err greatly, because what new blows have the moderns discovered that don't derive their origins from times passed? I find that all the guards, the blows, and every other thing that is used in these times was being used as well in the time of the ancients. Therefore I don't know how to consider it otherwise than that they mean that the fencing of today is very restricted compared to the ancient sort. To show how much value there is in the argument that there are new usages can be recognized by this: that the ancient masters knew it excellently, but rather their foundation was based upon closing to the half sword. But since this is a difficult thing which cannot be used without cleverness and great art, they reserved it to teach until the last, and not at the beginning, as do these new masters, many of whom, I believe, fool themselves. Because, as the sages say, you always have to teach the easy things at the beginning, and the difficult ones at the end. If, therefore, the ancients were using the long play, they were doing so with reason and were judging excellently, because with it one renders the arm and the body more limber together, throws blows long and with measure, and a man is made more agile and of good grace.

Lep. In these times we rarely see scholars who are well based in this art and that can make it turn out well.

Gio. This is because at present they don't take delight, as they did then, in virtue, and especially of this, because vice and avarice find their way into their hearts. But now we will leave this aside, and following our proposal, before we come to the fifth and sixth headings I will give you some advice necessary to parrying and striking, and on the

movement of the feet and the body, so that you can understand the rest with greater facility.

{Parrying with the sword: in how many ways it can be done.}

You have to know that [13verso] the sword can only parry in two ways: either with its true edge, or with the false one. The said falso is divided into two types, namely dritto and manco. You can avail yourself of the falso dritto to hit the enemy's sword toward the outside, that is, toward his right side; and of the falso manco, toward his left side. And any time that you hit the blow with a falso manco, you can wound thereafter with either a cut or a thrust, but when you hit it with a falso dritto, you can't wound except with a cut.

Now I want to advise you that when you're in motion to hit the enemy's blow with a falso dritto and want to wound with a mandritto, that you should immediately turn your wrist downwards and your body behind your right side. By doing this you'll hit the enemy's sword almost with your true edge. And in the same tempo you'll turn a dritto tramazzone, so that you'll be more secure, because you'll distance the enemy's sword further from you, and also come to parry and strike almost in one tempo. Moreover, your sword will always be in your adversary's presence. But you need to have a limber body and a very fast wrist, because otherwise it will do you no good.

Lep. Why not?

Gio. Because someone who parries with a falso dritto and doesn't have a limber body and fast wrist could easily throw the enemy's sword into his own face. And for this reason there are many who curse it. But since I hold a different opinion, I exhort you to practice it, since by doing so you'll come to limber up your body and improve your wrist; and moreover you'll make yourself good at parrying, and fast at striking.

So then, about parrying with the true edge of the sword, I'll tell you that every time that you parry with it, either on the right or the left side, you'll be able to respond with either a cut or a thrust, [14recto] because where one wounds with a thrust, one can also wound with a cut.

Lep. Which do you hold to be the better attack, the thrust or the cut?

{Wounding with the thrust is better than with the cut.}

Gio. Both are good. Nonetheless, I hold wounding with the thrust to be better, because the thrust takes less time through being nearer to the enemy, and it's also more fatal, nor does it ever depart from presence, for the safety of the one who holds it. But on the contrary, the cuts make a man more uncovered, and also take more time, because in the motion of the hand the sword is distanced further from the enemy. And therefore I hold striking with the thrust to be better and safer.

Lep. I believe it's so.

{On the motion of the feet and the body.}

Gio. Now coming to the motion of the feet and body together, when you find yourself in guards with your right foot forward, and it happens that you take two tempi, that is,

parrying and then striking, that you'll draw your left foot near your right one in the tempo in which you parry, and then while striking you'll step forward with your right. And so your left foot accompanies your parry, and your right one accompanies your attack. And on the contrary, when you parry and strike in a single tempo, while you move your sword you'll also go forward with your right foot, making your left one follow it, and in this case the right foot will accompany both.

But when you're in guards with the left foot forward, the right foot will almost always accompany both the parry and the attack, and the left leg must follow the right.

And regardless of which foot you have forward, you'll turn your body and rear leg to the opposite of the side on which you parry or hit the enemy's blow, because by doing so you'll make two defenses in one tempo, one with the sword and the other with the body. Moreover, you'll distance yourself from the said sword and draw significantly closer to [14verso] his opening, and it will be easier and safer for you to strike him.

I also want to advise you to keep your arm well extended during your defense of both sides, because thereby you'll push your enemy's blows further away from your body, and also be stronger and faster in striking. Observing these rules, you cannot err.

Lep. This advice has pleased me greatly, and moreover it will make it easier for me to understand the explanation of the fifth heading, of which I await your discussion.

{Ways of defending yourself from the enemy, and of harming him.}

Gio. In this fifth heading I want to show you all of the ways of defending yourself from the enemy, and harming him, when he wants to wound you either with a cut or a thrust, be it high or low, when you're fixed in coda lunga stretta. Taking our beginning in this guard, I'll tell you that when you're fixed in it against your enemy, and he wants to hit you in the head with a dritto fendente, you can draw your left foot near your right one, turning your body as I've said behind your right side, and in that tempo you'll raise your sword into guardia di testa, parrying the blow. Then you'll immediately step forward with your right foot, throwing a mandritto squalibro to his head, followed by a riverso, with you'll return into the said guard. Or, once you've parried the said blow in guardia di testa, you'll be able to wound him with two dritti tramazzoni, or thrust an imboccata into his chest followed by a dritto tramazzone.

You could also step toward the enemy's left side with your right foot and parry him with a mezzo mandritto, and immediately turn a riverso to his face, followed with another riverso; or thrust a punta riversa into his chest, together with a riverso tramazzone, which will end you in the aforesaid guard. You can also step forward with your right foot, making [15recto] the left one follow it, and parry the said fendente in guardia di faccia, thrusting the point into his face in that tempo, and for your shelter you'll turn a riverso tramazzone with which you'll go into the aforesaid guard. You could also, in the same tempo in which he wants to throw a blow at your head, thrust a punta riversa to his chest, or wound the enemy's hand with a mezzo mandritto, and for your defense immediately go with your sword into guardia di faccia, parrying the enemy's blow, and having done this, you'll settle yourself back into the same guard.

But if he wants to hit you in the head with a mandritto, either squalibro or tondo, you'll be able to follow the same rule given above, for parrying as for striking; except that when you go to parry with your sword in guardia di testa, you'll lower your

point somewhat toward the ground, turning your body behind your right side, keeping your arm will extended, so that thereby you'll render yourself more secure.

You could also let his blow go in vain, and immediately wound him with whatever seems most convenient to you.

Lep. I'd like you to explain this to me more clearly.

Gio. When you see the said blow approaching, you'll void your body, drawing it back somewhat, and poise yourself entirely upon your left foot, feinting as if you'll parry; but letting his blow pass, you'll push a thrust into his flank, or turn a dritto tramazzone to his sword arm. Having done which, you'll settle yourself into coda lunga stretta; and this is enough about how to give rise to this blow.

Lep. Now I understand you perfectly; therefore, continue.

Gio. Now, having returned into coda lunga stretta, if the enemy wants to wound you in the leg with a mandritto, you can parry it with the false edge of the sword, stepping forward with your right foot, and turning two dritti tramazzoni to his head in that tempo, making your left leg follow behind your right, and immediately returning [15verso] into the aforesaid guard. Or, once you've parried, you can turn a riverso from beneath upwards, followed by an imbriocata. You could also draw your right foot near your left one, and stick your point in his face in that tempo; then immediately adopt the aforesaid guard.

But if he wants to throw a mandritto ridoppio at you, you can protect yourself with a mezzo mandritto squalibro, and give him a riverso tondo to the head in response, or a punta riversa to the chest followed by a riverso tramazzone, with which you'll settle yourself in the aforesaid guard.

But if perchance he wants to wound you in the head with a riverso fendente, you can go with your sword into guardia di testa, and parry it there, then immediately step toward his right side with your right foot, turning two mandritti to his head with your wrist, or wound him with an imbriocata to the chest. You can also parry him in guardia d'entrare, stepping toward his right side with your right foot, and stick your point in his face in that tempo, and having done so, return into the same guard.

But if instead the enemy throws a riverso, squalibro or tondo, at your head, you can hit it with the true edge of your sword, and immediately turn a riverso to his head; or stick an imbriocata through his flanks. You can also defend yourself if you go into guardia d'entrare, and thrust the point into his chest in the same tempo. You can also feint as if to parry, and let the blow turn in vain, then wound him with whatever seems most opportune; however, immediately restore yourself to the aforesaid guard.

But when he wants to respond to you with a riverso to the leg, you can parry that with a riverso ridoppio, and immediately advance with your right foot, turning a dritto tramazzone to his head, or thrust an imbriocata to his chest. You can also draw your leg back, sticking your point in his face, or turn a riverso to his sword arm, and [16verso] immediately return into coda lunga stretta.

But if he throws a riverso ridoppio, you can parry it with a riverso, and wound him with whatever seems most suitable, and immediately resume the aforesaid guard.

But if perchance he wants to wound you with an overhand thrust, you can hit it with the false edge of the sword, dropping its point toward the ground, turning your wrist well and your body behind your right side, and, all in one tempo, turning two dritti tramazzoni to his head, making the last one fall into porta di ferro. One can also parry it with a mezzo mandritto, thrusting him in the breast with a punta riversa, or slicing him in the face with a riverso, followed by another riverso with which you'll return into the aforesaid guard. During the thrusting of the said imbroccata you could also draw your right foot near your left one, and beat it away upwards in that tempo with a riverso ridoppio, and immediately advance and push an overhand thrust into his face. You'll similarly defend yourself from the said imbroccata if you draw back your right foot a pace, wounding him in the hand in that tempo with a mezzo mandritto which will descend into cinghiale porta di ferro. Then immediately do a falso and a riverso, returning your right foot forward, settling yourself into the previously named guard.

But when the enemy wants to thrust a stoccata into your chest, you can parry it with a falso dritto, turning your wrist and body well as I've said, and in the same tempo you'll turn two mandritti to his head with your wrist. Next, you could parry it with a mezzo mandritto, and immediately extend a thrust to his face, then for your shelter turn a riverso squalibro, with which you'll resume the aforesaid guard. To this same stoccata you can also join your true edge against the enemy's sword, extending the point into his breast all in one tempo, and you'll find yourself with your sword [16verso] in guardia di faccia, whence for your protection you'll turn a riverso tramazzone, returning into the aforesaid guard. You'll also protect yourself if you throw a mezzo mandritto at the enemy's hand, drawing your right foot back a pace in that tempo, and then immediately return to the guard of which we've discussed; or, when he throws the said stoccata at you, in that instant turn a riverso tramazzone to his sword arm, but your left foot will have to follow your right one.

And these are the defenses and attacks that can be performed against mandritti, riversi, and thrusts, finding yourself fixed in coda lunga stretta.

Lep. The rule you followed in discussing this guard was truly of the greatest satisfaction to me. Therefore continue with the remainder.

Gio. It will serve you well to follow the same rule with regard to the others, since this is the best and the easiest route that can be used to lead you to understanding of this art. And therefore I say to you, that finding yourself before your enemy with your sword in coda lunga alta, if he happens to throw a mandritto to your head, you'll pass forward with your right foot and go with your sword into guardia di testa all in one tempo in order to defend yourself, making your left foot follow your right one, and immediately thrust an imbroccata into his chest, or turn two dritti tramazzoni to his head. But for your shelter, you'll return your right foot back a pace together with a riverso, which will stop in the said guard. One can also let the blow pass, and wound him with whatever will seem most opportune. During your stepping with the right foot, you could as well parry it with a mandritto squalibro, and immediately give him a mandritto tondo to the head, or slice him in the face with a riverso, having done which, you'll return your right foot to the rear, throwing [17recto] a riverso tramazzone in that tempo, with which you'll return to the same guard above. Similarly, when your enemy throws the said mandritto, you can pass

forward with your right foot and go with your sword into guardia di faccia to protect yourself, sticking the point immediately into his face. And having done so, you'll resume the same named guard. Beyond which, while he throws the blow, one can give him a mezzo mandritto to the sword hand, stepping somewhat toward his left side with the right foot, and immediately place oneself in the aforesaid guard.

But when he responds to you with a mandritto to the leg, you'll parry it with a falso dritto, advancing forward with your right foot during that parry, and all in one tempo you'll turn a riverso from beneath upwards to the enemy's arm, or turn a dritto tramazzone to his head. You could also draw back your leg and thrust a stoccata into his face, and then immediately place yourself back into coda lunga alta.

But if the enemy throws a riverso to your head, you'll immediately go into guardia di testa to defend yourself, stepping with your right foot in that tempo, turning two dritti tramazzoni to his head, or thrusting an imbrocata to his chest. You could also parry in guardia d'entrare, and thrust the point into his face in that tempo. One could equally allow the blow to go in vain and immediately wound him with whatever will be most convenient, and having done so, return to the aforesaid guard.

But when he responds to you with a riverso to the leg, you'll draw back your foot and stick the point in his face in that tempo, returning immediately back to the customary guard.

But when the enemy throws an overhand thrust at you, you can step forward with your right foot, parrying with the falso in the way I told you in the advice above, namely by turning your body well behind your right side, along with [17verso] turning two dritti tramazzoni to his head with your wrist, having done which, you'll arrange yourself in the same guard. You can also step forward with your right foot, and parry with a mezzo mandritto squalibro, and immediately wound him in the chest with a punta riversa, or slice him in the face with a riverso tondo followed by another riverso, with which you'll return into coda lunga alta.

You can similarly retire back a pace with your left foot and wound the enemy's hand all in one tempo with a mezzo mandritto, and after this make a turn of the fist, returning forward with your foot, and setting yourself in the aforesaid guard.

But if he throws a stoccata to your chest, you can parry it with a falso, turning your wrist well, together with your body, and advancing forward all in one tempo wound him in the head with two dritti done with your wrist, making the last one fall into porta di ferro. It will also turn out well for you if you parry with the true edge of your sword and immediately stick the point in his face, or cut him with a riverso tondo to the face. Next, as you step with your feet you can adjoin the forte of the true edge of your sword onto that of your enemy, sticking your point into his chest. Moreover, you can turn your left foot back, and give him a mezzo mandritto to his sword hand in that tempo. Similarly, one could step into a large pace toward the enemy's left side with the right foot, and in that step, push an overhand thrust into his flank. Beyond which you could defend yourself from the said thrust by stepping toward his left side with your right foot, turning a riverso tramazzone to his right arm all in one tempo.

And this is the manner in which to defend yourself from the enemy and harm him when he wants to wound you either with a cut or a thrust, be it high or low, when you find yourself in the aforesaid guard of coda lunga alta.

Lep. These [18recto] defenses and attacks of which you've just spoken seem to be similar to those of coda lunga stretta.

Gio. It's true, because these two guards are of one same nature, nor is there any other difference except for the stepping that's done with the right foot, which one can't help but do when wishing to parry the enemy's blows and harm him. And although there's no other difference between them than what I've just said, I still didn't want to refrain from discussing it with you just because of this, nor from fully showing you everything that can be done in the said guard, the better to bring you to a complete understanding.

Lep. I hope by this rule to obtain from you as much as I desire.

{Porta di ferro stretta}

Gio. Now, coming to the discussion of the third guard, which will be porta di ferro stretta, if you're fixed in it in front of your enemy and he throws a mandritto fendente to your head, you can hit it with a falso manco, making your left foot push your right one forward, then immediately slice him in the face with a mandritto, which will return you to the same guard, or, having parried the said blow, you'll step toward the enemy's right side with your left foot, turning a riverso to his head in that tempo. You could also, once you've parried said fendente with the falso, turn your fist downwards and immediately stick your point into his face, followed by a dritto tramazzone which will end in the aforesaid guard. Similarly, while the enemy is throwing the fendente, you could parry it in guardia di testa, passing presently toward his left side with your right foot, and give him two dritti tramazzone to his head, or thrust an imbrocata into his chest, which will fall into the guard named above. Next, you can protect yourself with a riverso squalimbri, stepping somewhat toward his right side with your left foot, and immediately advance forward with your right one, throwing an overhand thrust to his flank or [18verso] turning a riverso to his head, and having done this, return to the guard employed. You could also parry the said blow in guardia di faccia, and thrust the point into his face in the same tempo, and immediately return into the aforesaid guard.

But if the enemy throws a mandritto, squalimbri or tondo, at your upper body, you'll protect yourself against those either in guardia di testa or guardia di faccia, whichever is easier, giving him whatever response is most opportune, because against these you can do almost all of the same defenses that you'd done against the mandritto fendente.

But to get back to the discussion, when he throws a mandritto to your leg, you can draw your right foot near your left one, thrusting the point into his face in that tempo, and having done so, return into porta di ferro.

But if he throws a riverso to your upper body, you can hit it with the false edge of your sword, and promptly turn a riverso to his head, or after having hit the blow, you could turn your fist downward and thrust the point into his face, followed by a dritto tramazzone with which you'll reassume the aforesaid guard. You can also parry in guardia di testa and immediately wound him either with a mandritto or an overhand thrust. Beyond which, you can hit the said riverso with the true edge of your sword and immediately turn your hand upwards and cut him in the face with a mandritto, or, having hit the blow, you can stick an imbrocata in his chest. One could also parry in guardia

d'entrare and stick the point in his face in one tempo, having done which, one must return to the guard employed.

But if he throws a riverso to your leg, you'll protect yourself with a riverso ridoppio and in one stroke turn a riverso to his head or push the point into his flanks, or draw your leg back somewhat, pushing the point into his face in that instant.

[19recto] But if perchance he throws a riverso ridoppio at you, you'll parry it with the true edge of your sword, and promptly wound him either with a riverso tondo or a punta riversa, followed by a dritto tramazzone, with which you'll reassume the aforesaid guard.

But if he thrusts an imbroccata to your chest, you can parry that with the false edge of your sword, passing in that tempo toward his right side with your right foot, turning a riverso to your enemy's arm and then immediately returning into porta di ferro. You will also be a good defender against the said imbroccata with a riverso squalibro, swiftly pushing an overhand thrust into his flank. You can also join your true edge with your enemy's sword, immediately thrusting the point into his face. Beyond which, you can parry it with a dritto tramazzone, drawing your right foot behind your left in that tempo, and making your sword go into cinghiale porta di ferro, having done which, you'll advance forward a pace with your right foot, accompanied by a dritto tramazzone, with which you'll return to the aforesaid guard.

But if he throws an underhand thrust at you, you can parry it with a falso manco, and then slice him in the face with a mandritto or turn a riverso to his head, making one foot push the other one forward. In addition, once you've hit the said thrust with the false edge of your sword, you can make a half turn of your fist and push the point into his face all in one tempo, followed by a dritto tramazzone with which you'll go into the guard named above. Similarly, one can defend against it with a riverso squalibro, advancing forward somewhat with the left foot toward the enemy's right side, then gliding forward with the right one and wounding him with a riverso to the thigh, or, after you've parried, you can thrust an imbroccata to his flank, with which you'll fix yourself in the aforesaid guard. You can **[19verso]** also go into guardia d'entrare against the said stoccata, placing the forte of your true edge against the enemy's sword, pushing the point into his chest, or as he throws the said stoccata, you can retire back a pace with your right foot, and in that tempo you'll turn a dritto tramazzone to his sword arm, which will fall into cinghiale porta di ferro. Then you'll immediately pass forward with your right foot, together with a mandritto with your wrist, with which you'll settle yourself into said guard.

And these are the ways you must follow in protecting yourself from your enemy's blows, and in harming him, being fixed in porta di ferro stretta.

Lep. Now tell me, if I were in porta di ferro larga or porta di ferro alta, could the same defenses be performed?

Gio. Almost all of them could be done, because these three guards are of one same nature, so there is still but little difference between one of them and another. And so that you understand, the wide guards serve in the wide play, and the narrow ones in the narrow.

But to return to the discussion of them, when you find yourself before your adversary in cinghiale porta di ferro and he wants to strike you with a mandritto to the

head, you can step forward with your right foot and parry in guardia di testa, and immediately turn two dritti tramazzone to his upper body or thrust an imbroccata into his chest, making your left leg follow behind your right one, and immediately return your right foot back a pace together with a dritto tramazzone with which you'll fix yourself in the said guard. You can also parry him in guardia d'entrare, advancing forward with your right foot, and thrust the point into his face in the same tempo. You will also defend yourself if you hit the said blow with a falso manco from beneath upwards, stepping forward right away with your right foot, and immediately [20recto] turning a riverso to the head, or cutting him with a mandritto to the arm. And having done so, you'll place yourself back in the aforesaid guard. It will also be useful during the stepping forward to go into guardia di faccia with your sword in order to protect yourself, and in that tempo thrust the point into his chest. Beyond which, once you've parried in guardia di faccia, you can advance toward the enemy's right side with your left foot and turn a riverso to his head, and immediately return into your guard.

But if he throws a riverso to your head, you can parry it with the false edge of your sword and strike him in the head with a similar riverso, or, having parried with the false edge, you'll turn your fist downwards, pushing the point into his face. You could also hit it with a riverso squalimbro, advancing forward with your right foot, and stick an imbroccata through his flank. Next, you could go into guardia d'entrare with your sword, and protect yourself from him there, thrusting the point in his face in the same tempo; having done which, you'll return to the employed guard.

But if he wants to respond to you with a riverso to your leg, you can advance with your right foot, and parry with a riverso ridoppio, thrusting an imbroccata to his chest in response, or, while he's throwing the blow to your leg, draw your foot back, sticking a thrust in his face in that tempo, and having done such, reassume the aforesaid guard.

But if perchance he pushes an overhand thrust at you, you can parry that with the false edge, and turn a riverso to his head or cut him in the face with a mandritto. You can also hit it with the true edge of your sword, stepping forward with your right foot at once and thrust your point through his flank. Otherwise, during his thrusting of the imbroccata, you can adjoin your true edge upon his sword and step forward all in one tempo and thrust your point into his face. You can similarly [20verso] defend yourself by drawing your left foot behind your right one and turning a dritto tramazzone in that tempo to his sword hand, and then immediately return into cinghiale porta di ferro.

But if your enemy wants to wound you with an underhand thrust, you can parry it with a falso manco, advancing forward with your right foot, and immediately turn a riverso to his head or cut him in the face with a mandritto; or, having parried with the false edge, you can make a half turn of your fist, and thrust your point into his face. It will also avail you against the said stoccata to draw your left foot back and turn a dritto tramazzone to your enemy's hand in that tempo, or, as he thrusts the stoccata, you can meet it with the forte of your true edge, advancing with your right foot, and thrust your point into his chest in the same tempo. Next, you can parry with a riverso squalimbro, stepping forward immediately and wounding him with an imbroccata to the flank, followed by a dritto tramazzone which will go into porta di ferro, and then you'll immediately return your right foot back a pace, together with a mandritto from the wrist, with which you'll fix yourself in the said guard.

And with this I've finished the explication of these four most necessary guards, in which I've demonstrated the defenses with both the false and true edge of the sword, along with the attacks that can be delivered in each of them.

Lep. Which of these two defenses do you hold to be better?

{Which is the surer defense.}

Gio. Both are good, however the defenses that are done with the true edge of the sword are better and surer. Because they are almost always done with the forte of the sword, that is, from the middle back, and also (as I've told you), one can always wound with either the thrust or the cut; and moreover, the point of the sword almost never departs from the enemy's presence. But on the contrary, the defenses that are done [21recto] with the false edge are less strong and sure, because most of them are done with the debole of the sword, which is from the middle forward, nor can one ever wound with a thrust, and it also departs from the enemy's presence; so for these reasons I hold parrying with the true edge of the sword to be better and surer.

Lep. I'd maintained that the sword has greater strength from its middle forward than from its middle back.

Gio. In striking it has greater strength, but not in parrying.

Lep. Since you've clarified this for me, I pray you to discuss as well guardia d'alicorno with the right foot forward, which I long to understand, since it is also prized and often used.

{Guardia d'Alicorno.}

Gio. I'll gladly speak of it. Accordingly, I'll tell you that if you found yourself in the said guard and your enemy wanted to throw a fendente to your head, you could draw your left foot near your right one and go with your sword into guardia di testa to defend yourself, and immediately advance with your right foot and turn a mandritto to his head with your wrist or thrust an imboccata to his chest. You could also, when parrying in guardia di testa, pretend to give him a dritto tramazzone to his upper body, but all in one tempo turn a riverso to his thigh together with a riverso ridoppio, with which you'll return to the said guard.

But if instead he wants to wound you with a mandritto, either squalibro or tondo, you'll turn your left side behind your right, and you'll defend yourself with your sword in guardia di testa, lowering the point a bit toward the ground, and you'll immediately turn two dritti tramazzoni to his head, or stick the point in his chest. Beyond which, you could parry in guardia di faccia and thrust the point into his face in the same tempo, or parry with a mezzo mandritto squalibro and immediately respond to him with either a punta riversa or a riverso tondo, and having done so, you'll return [21verso] to your guard.

But if perchance he throws a mandritto or riverso to your leg, you'll draw your right foot back somewhat, pushing an imboccata into his chest or turning a mandritto to his right arm.

But if he throws a riverso to your head, you'll parry it with your sword in the same guard, and thrust your point through his flanks in one tempo, having done which, you'll return into the aforesaid guard with a riverso from beneath upwards.

But if he wants to throw an overhand thrust at you, you can pass toward his left side with your right foot, making your left foot follow it, and parry with a mandritto squalibro, and immediately cut him with a riverso to the head or thrust a punta riversa into his chest. Beyond which, it would be good against the said imbroccata to draw your right foot near your left one and smack it aside with a riverso ridoppio, and immediately advance forward with your right foot and stick a thrust into his face. Or you could defend yourself by casting your right foot back a pace and giving him a mandritto squalibro to his sword hand in the same tempo, which will go into cinghiale porta di ferro; having done which, you'll promptly return into the guard whereof we speak.

But if he throws a stoccata in order to give it to you in the chest, you'll step towards your enemy's left side with your right foot, and in that tempo you'll smack it with a mandritto and immediately wound him either with a cut or a thrust, depending on which seems good. Against the said thrust, you could also pass toward his right side with your left foot and beat it aside with your left hand, then turn a riverso to his head all in one tempo, or thrust your point into his face, and having done thus, reassume the said guardia d'alicorno. With which, as much as I've explained to you up to this point will suffice.

Lep. As with the others, you've satisfied me about this one, and with [22recto] much more ease than I'd thought, since it especially is held to be very difficult to learn. But the order that is seen in it would make anyone informed easily.

Gio. So you see how much those who say that theory isn't needed in the art of fencing fool themselves, to which one can respond that if they don't walk this path they'll never teach perfectly, since this it is which reveals the principles, the causes, the effects, and finally teaches rationally and easily the rule and the method that one must follow in order to teach it adequately.

But since I've always discussed one guard at a time, now I'll speak of all of them together, that is, when in one and when in another, according to which of them you find yourself in, because you can't always remain in a single guard without difficulty.

Lep. Why not?

Gio. As a result of the variations in attacking, from which, reasonably, no blow can be thrown that doesn't result in some guard, as occurs with mandritti as well as with the imbroccata, which end in porta di ferro or cinghiale porta di ferro. The riversi, then, finish in coda lunga, whether with the right or the left foot forward. The stoccata and also the punta riversa can end themselves in either the one or the other guard; nonetheless the norm is for the punta riversa to finish in coda lunga stretta, and the stoccata in porta di ferro, and from here arises the difficulty. But I can still do more than this, so that you'll make yourself well practiced in them.

Lep. I thank you, and this pleases me, because this is my desire.

Gio. Then we could pose the case that you were arranged with your sword in coda lunga stretta, and that your enemy threw a mandritto to your head. You would proceed to parry it in guardia di faccia, advancing forward with your right foot, and [22verso] thrust the point in his face all in one tempo, then immediately return your right foot back a pace, followed by a riverso squalibro, with which you'll fix yourself in coda lunga alta. Now, if you're in the said guard, and he wants to throw an overhand thrust at you, you'll pass forward with your right foot, making your left one follow it, and parry it with a mandritto squalibro and turn a riverso tondo to his face all in one tempo, followed by a riverso with which you'll go into coda lunga stretta.

But if the enemy responds with a mandritto to your leg, you'll protect yourself from that with the false edge of your sword, and turn two dritti tramazzone to his head in the same tempo, making the last one fall into porta di ferro stretta.

But if you're in said guard and he turns a riverso to your upper body, you'll parry it with a riverso squalibro, passing toward his right side in that tempo with your left foot, and advancing immediately with the right one, you'll wound him with an imbrogata to his face, followed by a dritto tramazzone with which you'll go into porta di ferro alta.

And if he throws a stoccata to your face, you'll advance forward with your right foot and go with your sword into guardia d'entrare, joining your true edge onto the enemy's sword all in one tempo, sticking the point into his chest. Having done which, you'll draw your right foot back a pace, together with a dritto tramazzone, with which you'll fix yourself in cinghiale porta di ferro.

Now if you find yourself in the said guard, and he responds to you with a mandritto, a riverso, or a thrust, against any one of these blows you can hit your true edge into the enemy's sword, and then immediately pass forward with your right foot and stick an imbrogata into his chest followed by a dritto tramazzone with which you'll settle yourself into porta di ferro larga.

[23recto] But if perchance he thrusts a punta riversa to your face in order to give you a mandritto tondo, you'll hit the said thrust with your false edge. And when he turns the mandritto, you'll immediately go into guardia di faccia with your sword, sticking your point into his face in that tempo, and for your shelter you'll turn your right foot back a pace together with a riverso tramazzone with which you'll go into coda lunga alta. And being in the said guard, if he wants to wound you with a fendente to your head you'll pass forward with your right foot, raising your sword into guardia di testa, and thereby you'll protect yourself from it; but all in one tempo you'll cast your left hand onto his sword from beneath your own, performing a grip on him and immediately giving him a mandritto to his head or leg, as you wish; having done which, you'll return into coda lunga stretta.

And this is the manner that you must follow in playing with the guards, of which I could say many other things to you; but since we've discussed it sufficiently, it's well that we leave it there, and that we return tomorrow in order to discuss as much as you'll like.

Lep. I'll report myself to you in this and in every other thing.

THE THIRD DAY OF THE FIRST BOOK:

Which deals with the way that one must follow in attempting to harm the enemy when one wishes to be the first to attack.

{Of provoking and harming.}

Lep. Now that we're there, through following our discussion, by which you showed me yesterday the way to defend myself from my enemy and harm him, I'd also like for you to tell me today the manner that I have to follow in attempting to harm him [23verso] when I want to be the first to attack, whatever guard we're fixed in.

Gio. The way that you have to follow will be as follows. If perchance you find yourself in coda lunga stretta, from which we'll take our beginning, and you want to be the first, as you said, then I want you to provoke your enemy in the manner that I'll tell you now, so that you can attack him more safely. Gather your left foot near to your right one, then step forward with your right foot, and in that step you'll hit a falso dritto into his sword, turning your body well behind your right side, and turn a dritto tramazzone to his head in that tempo; or, having hit the falso into the enemy's sword, you can turn a riverso ridoppio to his right arm, followed by an imbrocata, and with it you'll place yourself in porta di ferro.

You can also give a mezzo mandritto to the enemy's sword, promptly stepping forward with your right foot and thrusting a punta riversa into his chest, followed by a riverso tramazzone which will fall into coda lunga stretta.

Beyond which you can step forward with your left or right foot to his right side, and extend a punta riversa to his face, and as he raises his sword to defend himself, you'll immediately advance forward with your foot and turn a mandritto tondo to his head in the same tempo, or, after you've extended the said thrust, you'll turn your fist downwards, thrusting an imbrocata to his flank, and your sword will stop in porta di ferro.

Otherwise, you can step forward toward your enemy's left side with your right foot and throw an underhand thrust to his face in that tempo, making your left foot follow behind your right one and your sword return into coda lunga stretta.

You can also provoke and wound him in two other manners. The [24recto] first one is by cutting him with a mezzo mandritto to the sword hand, gathering your body backward somewhat together with your sword in that tempo, and then placing yourself into porta di ferro stretta, and this is one way of inciting the enemy, since, seeing you open, he'll have reason to thrust at you. Once he thrusts at you, you can immediately proceed with the forte of your sword on your enemy's, advancing forward with your right foot all in one tempo and thrusting your point into his chest. But if perchance he deviates, that is, disengages his blade under yours, in order to put you aside and wound you, you'll promptly turn the true edge of your sword and your body together with it against that of your enemy, raising up your fist somewhat, sticking a punta riversa into his chest.

The second one is that you can place the true edge of your sword on that of your enemy, stepping somewhat forward toward his right side with your right foot in that instant, so that by doing so you'll come to obligate his sword and will be able to harm him easily with a punta riversa. But if he disengages his sword under yours in that

tempo, wishing to strike you, you'll immediately turn your true edge outward against his, thrusting your point into his face. And these are the provocations, together with the attacks, that can be performed when both are in the aforesaid guard.

{Why provocations are performed.}

Said provocations, so that you understand better, are performed for two reasons. One is in order to make the enemy depart from his guard and incite him to strike, so that one can attack him more safely (as I've said). The other is because from the said provocations arise attacks which one can then perform with greater advantage, because if you proceed to attack determinedly and without judgment when your enemy is fixed in guard, you'll proceed with significant disadvantage, since he'll be able to perform [24verso] many counters. Therefore I want to advise you that you mustn't be the first to attack determinedly for any reason, waiting instead for the tempi. Rather, fix yourself in your guards with subtle discernment, always keeping your eyes on your enemy's hand more so than on the rest of him.

Lep. But what if the enemy doesn't want to throw anything?

Gio. In that case you'll provoke him in the way that I said above, because by doing so he'll be forced to respond.

Lep. But if the enemy performs these provocations against me, how could I defend myself against them?

Gio. By performing the counters to them.

Lep. Would you also tell me how these counters are done?

{What the counters are to the provocations in coda lunga stretta.}

Gio. If the enemy hits with a falso in order to turn the tramazzone, you'll immediately go into guardia di faccia with your sword, sticking the point into his face, and this is the first counter.

Second, when he hits likewise with a falso in order to give you the riverso ridoppio to the arm, you'll thrust the point into his chest or draw your right foot back a pace together with a riverso squalimbri, with which you'll go into coda lunga alta.

Third, as he beats your sword with the mandritto, you'll turn a dritto tramazzone, drawing your right foot back in that tempo, and your sword will go into cinghiale porta di ferro.

Fourth, when he thrusts the punta riversa in order to wound you with a mandritto, you'll immediately go into guardia d'entrare, joining your true edge to his sword, pressing the point into his chest; or, as he extends the said thrust, you'll hit it with a riverso, retiring your right foot back a pace in the same tempo, followed by another riverso squalimbri, which will fall into coda lunga alta.

Fifth, as he throws the thrust in order to give it to you in the chest, you'll immediately send your right foot across to the enemy's left side, turning a riverso tramazzone [25recto] to his right arm all in one tempo, with which you'll return into coda lunga stretta.

Sixth, when he cuts toward his enemy's hand with a mezzo mandritto, without stepping you'll raise your sword into guardia d'alicorno, thereby interrupting his intent.

Seventh and last, as he places his sword upon yours, you'll promptly draw your right foot behind your left one and turn a riverso tramazzone in that tempo, which will fall into coda lunga alta. You could also draw your right foot back a pace, turning a mandritto with your wrist in that instant, with which you'll fix yourself in cinghiale porta di ferro. And these are the counters to the provocations in coda lunga stretta.

Lep. From these counters arises a doubt, which is that now that you've told me the manner that I have to follow in provoking the enemy, and then their counters, I'd also like to know how these counters can be done so that they'll be safe.

Gio. I'll tell you: although I've told you their counters, don't assume because of this that they can't be done safely, because every time that you have judgment, you'll do them safely, and you'll acquire that by practicing often and with a variety of partners, since through this variety you'll make yourself judicious and shrewd in provoking your enemy. *{Provocations in coda lunga alta.}*

Now we come to the provocations in the second guard, which will be coda lunga alta. Finding both of you fixed in this, and wanting to be the first to provoke your enemy, you can pass forward with your right foot and execute a falso and mandritto against his sword, or, having done the falso, make a feint of turning a dritto tramazzone to his head, but rather turn a riverso to his thigh.

You can also glide your right foot forward, thrusting a stoccata to his face, followed by a mandritto to his head or leg as you [25verso] wish. Beyond which, in the step forward, you could extend an overhand thrust to his flank, turning your left side behind your right in that tempo, and for your defense you'll draw your right foot behind your left one, together with a riverso squalimbri, with which you'll return into coda lunga alta. And this is the second manner of provoking your enemy when you're in the said guard.

Their counters are that when he steps forward with his right foot and executes the falso and mandritto, you'll immediately change your pace, turning the true edge of your sword upward in that tempo, fixing yourself in guardia d'alicorno. But if he hits with the falso and performs the feint of wanting to hit you with a riverso, during the hitting that he does with the falso you'll turn a riverso tramazzone, drawing your left foot back, and your sword will remain in coda lunga stretta.

But if he extends the thrust with his right foot forward in order to give you a mandritto to the head, without moving your feet you'll parry it with the true edge of your sword, and as he turns the mandritto to your head, you'll immediately pass forward with your right foot, and go with your sword into guardia di faccia to protect yourself, thrusting your point in his face all in one tempo. But if after the said thrust he wants to turn the mandritto to your leg, you'll draw your left foot near your right one and stick a punta riversa into his face in the same tempo. But if he steps toward your left side and extends the thrust, you'll promptly turn a riverso tramazzone to his sword arm, with which you'll fix yourself in coda lunga stretta. And thus you'll have understood their counters.

Lep. I understand them perfectly.

{Provocations in porta di ferro stretta.}

Gio. Now note these other provocations in the third guard, which will be porta di ferro stretta. If both of you are fixed therein, and you want to be the first to provoke [26recto] your enemy, you can hit his sword with a falso manco, making your left foot push your right one forward, and immediately cut a mandritto to his right arm, and return your sword into the said guard.

You can also hit the sword with a riverso ridoppio, making your left foot follow your right one, and thrust an imbriocata into his chest all in one tempo, and your sword will fall into the aforesaid guard.

You can also pretend to give him a dritto tramazzone to the head, and as he raises his sword in order to defend it, you'll turn a riverso tondo to his thigh.

Next, you can beat his sword with a mezzo riverso, and passing forward with your left foot all in one tempo, thrust a punta riversa to his face, and then immediately advance with your right foot toward his left side, turning a mandritto tondo to his head; or, having extended the said thrust, you can also pass forward with your right foot and extend another thrust to his chest, and for your defense you'll make a riverso tramazzone to his sword hand, casting your right foot behind your left one in that tempo, and your sword will rest in coda lunga alta.

You could moreover go forward with your right foot, and place the true edge of your sword upon that of your enemy in the same tempo, and thrust the point into his chest, and thereafter reassume the employed guard. And these are the provocations that can be done when one is in porta di ferro stretta.

Lep. Among these provocations you've discussed, it seems to me that there's little difference between one and another.

Gio. It's true that there are few differences, since ultimately all the blows resolve only into a cut or a thrust. And the reason is that wounding with either the true edge or the false one, be it to the right or left side, either high or low, will always be a cut. [26verso] Similarly, if you wound with either an imbriocata, or a stoccata, or a punta riversa, it will always be a thrust. And therefore everything resolves into a cut or a thrust.

But to continue with the counters in the third guard, when the enemy hits your sword with the falso, you'll immediately turn a dritto tramazzone, drawing your right foot back a pace in that tempo, and your sword will go into cinghiale porta di ferro; and with this defense you'll have interrupted his intention.

But when he hits your sword with a riverso ridoppio in order to wound you with an overhand thrust, in the hitting of your sword you'll pass forward with your left foot, but during the extension of the thrust, you'll parry it with a riverso squalimbri; having done which you'll advance forward with your right foot, sticking an imbriocata into his flank; or, during the advance of your right foot, you'll adjoin the true edge of your sword onto that of your enemy's, sticking your point in his face in that tempo.

But if he pretends to give you the dritto tramazzone, you'll go with your sword into guardia di faccia, and as he throws the riverso to your thigh, immediately casting your right foot behind your left one, you'll turn a riverso to his arm.

But when he beats with a *riverso* on your sword, you won't make any movement, but during his pushing of a *punta riversa*, you'll parry with the false edge, and if he turns the *mandritto tondo*, you'll draw back your right foot and give him a *mezzo mandritto* to his sword hand. Then, if he extends a thrust to give you a *riverso ridoppio*, you'll parry that with your true edge **<n.b. the *riverso ridoppio* eliciting this counter is not mentioned among the provocations above>**, and as he turns the *ridoppio*, you'll guide your right foot toward his left side, turning a *riverso squalimbro* in that tempo, which will go into *coda lunga stretta*. But if he throws the two thrusts, in the extension of the first one you'll hit it with your false edge, but during the stepping that he makes with his right foot [27recto] in order to give you the second one, you'll parry it with a *mezzo mandritto*, wounding him in the chest with a *punta riversa*, followed by a *riverso squalimbro* with which you'll fix yourself in *coda lunga stretta*.

But if he puts the true edge of his sword on yours in order to wound you in the chest, you'll immediately turn your left side behind your right one, throwing a *riverso* from beneath upwards to his arm in that tempo, and your sword will ascend into *guardia d'alicorno*. You could also step diagonally with your right foot while he extends the said thrust, and disengage your sword under his in the same tempo and stick the point into his chest. And these are the counters that can be done when you're in the aforesaid guard of *porta di ferro stretta*.

Lep. It seems to me that almost all of these counters are based on retiring backwards a pace.

Gio. This is not to be doubted. Rather, I want you to know that any time that your enemy hits your sword, whether with the true edge or the false one, in order to drive you out of guard so that he can harm you more surely, the counter to it will be that, if he hits your sword toward your right side, you'll immediately turn a *riverso tramazzone*, retiring your forward foot straight back or along the diagonal. But if he hits it toward your left side, you'll promptly turn a *dritto tramazzone*, also drawing your forward foot back a pace, because by doing such you'll interrupt his plan.

Lep. Now I know that many deceive themselves who say that drawing backwards a pace is a great shame. Rather, I hear that it's entirely the opposite, that is, that this is nothing else than a change of guard, which is a very safe and necessary protection.

Gio. If it weren't so, this art would be imperfect, since there are a great number of [27verso] blows that you could not parry except by withdrawing back a pace. {*Provocations in cinghiale porta di ferro.*} But we leave them to remain in their opinions, and continue our discussion about provoking the enemy when he's fixed in *cinghiale porta di ferro* and you, finding yourself similarly in said guard, want to be the first to provoke him.

You can push a thrust toward his face, passing forward with your right foot and turning a *mandritto tondo* to his head, or, after you've pushed the said thrust, you'll turn a *dritto tramazzone*. You can also thrust a *punta riversa* toward his face during the advance of your foot, and as he raises his sword to parry it, you'll immediately pass toward his right side with your left foot, thrusting an *imbroccata* into his flank, followed by a *dritto*

tramazzone with which you'll fix yourself in cinghiale porta di ferro, and this is the manner to provoke the enemy, being in said guard.

Now, their counters will be that as the enemy pushes the thrust with his right foot forward, you'll ward that with your false edge. But when he wants to wound you with a mandritto, tondo or tramazzone, you'll immediately go with your sword into guardia di faccia, thrusting your point into his face; or you'll cast your left foot behind your right one, harming his sword arm with a mezzo mandritto. But if he wants to extend he thrust in order to give you an imbroccata to the flank, you can step forward with your right foot and hit it with the true edge of your sword; but in the step that he takes in order to push the imbroccata into your flank, you'll parry it with a riverso ridoppio, and immediately wound him in the chest with an overhand thrust, and for your shelter you'll turn a riverso squalimbro, drawing your right foot back, and your sword will stop in coda lunga alta. And these are the counters to the said provocations in cinghiale [28recto] porta di ferro.

Lep. These counters are very dear to me, but why have you made mention of mezzi mandritti many times? I'd gladly know why they're done and why they're called that; and then continue the discussion of the provocations that can be done in the other guard.

{Mezzi mandritti, why they are done, and why they are named so.}

Gio. I'll tell you. You know that the mandritto squalimbro begins at the enemy's left shoulder and finishes at his right knee, and because of this it was named a finished blow. The mezzo mandritto is of the same nature, nonetheless, owing to it not being a finished blow, and also because of it taking less time, it's come to be called a mezzo mandritto, which you'll perform most of the time when you find yourself near your enemy, for greater safety.

{Provocations in guardia d'alicorno.} Now, to continue with the provocations in the fifth and last guard, which is guardia d'alicorno with the right foot forward, I'll tell you that when you find yourself fixed in this guard, and want to be the provocateur, you can advance toward his left side with your right foot, making your left one follow it, and turn a mandritto squalimbro to his sword in that tempo, and immediately slice his face with a riverso tondo followed by a riverso squalimbro with which you'll fix yourself in coda lunga stretta.

Or you'll provoke him to respond if, almost without moving your feet from there, you extend an overhand thrust which will fall into porta di ferro, and with these provocations you'll make him throw something.

Lep. Continue with the counters.

Gio. As your enemy turns the mandritto to your sword, cast your right foot behind your left one, turning a riverso tramazzone in that tempo, which will go into coda lunga alta.

But when he pushes the overhand thrust without advancing his foot, you can make a sign of following it with an imbroccata to his face; and if he raises his sword to defend himself, you'll immediately lower the point of your sword under that of your [28verso] enemy, pushing the point into his flanks all in one tempo, with which you'll place yourself in porta di ferro stretta. And with this I've brought the provocations and their counters in the five aforesaid most necessary guards to an end.

Lep. Now that I understand the way that I must follow in provoking the enemy and also in wounding him, together with the counters, lying in whatsoever of the guards named above, I'd also like to know: which of these guards do you hold to be the best?

Gio. I hold all of them to be good and secure, because almost all of the art of fencing is founded on them, and for this reason I've taught all of them. Nonetheless, the best one will be that to which you've accustomed yourself the most, and in which you've had the greater practice.

Lep. What does this practice consist of?

Gio. In training a lot, as I told you, and with a variety of partners, since by practicing with those of so many different talents you'll make yourself judicious, clever, and experienced. Accordingly, I exhort you not to do as many do, who, once they've been learning for a month, don't care to practice with anyone else, since they think that by training with their Master they know a lot. And the shame is that they say that they've learned secret blows that cannot be parried, and by this abuse they end up learning nothing good.

Lep. So what I've heard said many times isn't true, that some Masters happen to have secret blows that are indefensible?

Gio. I don't believe it, since I've conversed otherwise with my Masters and with infinite cognoscenti of this art; nor have I seen nor learned any such thing. On the contrary, I've always said and it's remained clear to me through experience that every dritto has its reverso, that is, that every blow has its parry. In consequence whereof I believe that if this were the truth, that this art would be held in a much higher reputation [29recto] than it is.

But leaving this discussion aside, I'll begin the sixth heading.

Lep. First, I want you to clarify a doubt for me, which is this: you said that every blow has its parry. So how can one wound his enemy?

Gio. With the tempo. Because every time that you attack in tempo, you'll be safe, whereas on the contrary, when you attack outside of tempo, you could be harmed.

Lep. Explain it to me better.

Gio. Since you give me an occasion to speak of tempo, I'll tell you. *{The tempo for attacking is recognized in five ways.}* There are five ways of recognizing this tempo of attacking. The first one is that once you've parried your enemy's blow, then it's a tempo to attack. The second, when his blow has passed outside your body, that's a tempo to follow it with the most convenient response. The third, when he raises his sword to harm you: while he raises his hand, that's the tempo to attack. The fourth, as he injudiciously moves from one guard to go into another, before he's fixed in that one, then it's a tempo

to harm him. The fifth and last, when the enemy is fixed in guard, and he raises or moves his forward foot in order to change pace or approach you, while he raises his foot, that's a tempo for attacking him, because he can't harm you as a result of being unsettled.

Lep. But how about when he moves the rear one?

Gio. It's also a tempo, but not as much of one as when he moves the forward one.

Lep. Since you've explained to me the ways by which one can recognize the tempo in which to attack, I'd like it if you told me in how many tempi one can attack with the sword.

Gio. In two tempi, one tempo, and half a tempo <i.e. "*mezzo tempo*">. The two tempi are when the sword parries, and then strikes. One tempo is when one attacks without parrying the blow, or when one parries and attacks in one instant. The half, and [29verso] last, is when one attacks while the enemy is throwing his blow.

But to return to the discussion of attacking outside of tempo, someone who proceeds determinedly without any advantage to attack an enemy who is fixed in guard will proceed outside of tempo, because in that case he'll find him free to perform the counters as I described to you in the fifth heading.

Lep. Now that I understand all the ways to recognize the tempo in which to attack, I'd also like to know, if I want to move my feet or change my guard judiciously and without danger, how I have to do it.

Gio. If you know that your enemy can reach you by extending his sword during your change of pace or guard, then you can move back or pivot around, turning a tramazzone to his sword in that tempo. You can also move your rear foot, or while moving yourself hit the enemy's sword with your false or true edge, throwing a cut or thrust at him, depending on the circumstances, because by doing so you'll come to move with judgment and without danger.

Lep. These seem to me to resemble the recommendations that you gave me regarding provoking the enemy.

Gio. It's true that these are also of the same manner, because (as I told you in the beginning), you can't proceed safely to attack without them, but have to wait for the tempi.

Lep. Now I recall in today's discussion that you also made mention of tempi. I'd like to understand better and more clearly what you meant to imply.

Gio. As I told you earlier, if your enemy moves his feet or raises his sword or changes his guard injudiciously, these are the tempi in which to attack him. Thus, I want to say again that when you recognize these tempi, you can proceed to wound him safely without doing anything else.

But returning to the sixth heading, I'll discourse to you [30recto] upon the straits of the half sword, of the true edge as well as the false one, and will tell you of the attacks that can be done in them together with their counters, so that I'll completely satisfy you in this regard.

Lep. There is nothing that you could do for me for which I'd be more grateful.

{Straits of the half sword.}

Gio. Well then, finding yourself falso to falso with your enemy, that is, so that the false edges of the swords kiss each other, and wanting to be the first one to attack, you can advance toward his left side with your right foot, turning a mandritto tondo to his head and immediately returning back with the same foot, together with a riverso squalimbri which will go into coda lunga alta.

The counter to this is that when the enemy turns the mandritto you'll promptly go into guardia di faccia to protect yourself, thrusting your point in his face in that tempo; or, as he moves to turn the mandritto, you'll draw your forward foot back a pace, turning a mandritto squalimbri to his right arm in that instant, with which you'll go into cinghiale porta di ferro.

Second: you can step forward with your foot and pretend to give him a mandritto tondo, nonetheless turning a riverso to his head, immediately returning backward with your foot with a mandritto tramazzone which will descend into cinghiale porta di ferro.

The counter will be that while he makes the feint, you won't move, but when he turns the riverso, you'll go back with your forward foot and turn a dritto tramazzone in the same tempo; or, as he turns the riverso, you can make a half turn of your fist downwards, turn your true edge against his sword, and thrust the point into his chest.

Third: you'll immediately turn your sword hand downwards, advancing with your right foot, and thrust an imbrogata into his flank.

The counter to this is that as [30verso] he turns his fist in order to throw the thrust, you'll immediately draw your forward foot back a pace, turning a riverso tramazzone to the enemy's arm all in one tempo.

Fourth: you'll advance toward the enemy's left side with your right foot, lowering the point of your sword under his in that tempo, thrusting the point into his chest. Then you'll immediately direct your forward foot back, together with a riverso squalimbri with which you'll fix yourself in coda lunga alta.

The counter will be this: while the enemy lowers his point, you'll take his sword with your true edge, throwing a stoccata to his face; or, as his point drops, you'll immediately fade back with your feet, throwing a mandritto squalimbri to the enemy's hand in the same tempo.

Fifth: you can glide forward with your foot, feinting to wound him with a mandritto, and immediately catch his sword under your own with your left hand, wounding him with a mandritto to his head or leg as you wish.

The counter to the aforesaid is that while he makes the feint in order to do the grip on you, you'll promptly withdraw your forward foot a pace, and wound him with a fendente to the head in that tempo.

Sixth: you can beat the enemy's sword to his left side, stepping forward and immediately slicing his face with a mandritto followed by a riverso, with which you'll

end up in coda lunga stretta; or, once you've beaten the sword, make a half turn of the fist, thrusting the point into his face and making one foot push the other one forward, and for your shelter, you'll draw the right foot back a pace together with a dritto tramazzone which will go into cinghiale porta di ferro.

The counter to this sixth one will be that when the [**31recto**] enemy beats your sword, you'll immediately turn your forward foot back, turning a tramazzone to his head all in one tempo. And these are the attacks together with their counters that can be done when facing your enemy falso to falso.

Lep. These straits of which you've just spoken, can they be done with either foot forward?

Gio. They can be, because the difference is that when you have your left foot forward, you'll need to step with your right one; and when with the right one forward, you'll need to advance with the same right one, but make your left one follow it; and this is the rule that you have to follow in moving your feet.

But to continue the discussion of the straits of the half sword, when you find yourself facing your enemy true edge to true edge, that is, with the true edges of the swords kissing each other, and you want to be the first one to attack, you can turn a riverso tramazzone to his head, stepping toward his right side in that tempo with your left foot, and your sword will fall into coda lunga alta.

The counter will be that while the enemy steps with his left foot in order to give you the riverso, you'll immediately turn your true edge against his sword, thrusting the point into his chest; or you'll direct your right foot back a pace turning a riverso squalimbri in that tempo with which you'll go into coda lunga alta.

Second strait: You can turn the back of your hand upwards, making the point of your sword go toward your enemy's face, and as he parries the thrust, you'll immediately slice a mandritto to his chest that will slide downward, followed by a riverso squalimbri, with which you'll adopt coda lunga stretta.

The counter to this is that when the enemy turns his point toward your face in order to give you the mandritto, you'll draw your right foot back a pace, turning [**31verso**] a riverso squalimbri all in one tempo, which will end in coda lunga alta.

Third: you can make a feint of giving him a riverso, and nonetheless give him a mandritto tondo to the head, and for your shelter you'll draw your right foot back a pace, followed by a dritto tramazzone with which you'll fix yourself in cinghiale porta di ferro.

The counter to the aforesaid is that as the enemy makes the feint of turning the riverso, you won't move, but as he turns the mandritto, you, being in guardia di faccia, will thrust the point into his face; then you'll guide your right foot back a pace together with a riverso squalimbri which will go into coda lunga alta.

Fourth strait: you can hit the hilt of your sword into your enemy's sword, upwards toward his left side, passing forward with your left foot all in one tempo and turning a riverso tramazzone to his head, with which you'll fix yourself in coda lunga alta.

The counter to this is that when the enemy hits his hilt into your sword, you'll immediately draw your right foot back a pace, giving him a mandritto tramazzone to his sword hand in that tempo, with which you'll assume cinghiale porta di ferro.

Fifth: You can make a half turn of your fist, not removing your sword from his, as if you were in the act of turning a *riverso tramazzone*, and in that tempo you'll turn the pommel of your sword over his wrist on the outside, driving it downward in such a way that you can wound him in the head with a *riverso*. In the same tempo you could also put your left foot behind his right leg so that you could easily make him fall, or alternately you could perform a *presa* on his sword arm with your left hand and then wound him however seems best.

The counter to the aforesaid will be that as you see the turning of his sword hand, [32recto] you'll promptly step toward his right side with your left foot, turning a *riverso squalibro* to his head, with which you'll settle yourself into *coda lunga alta*.

Sixth strait: in reaching the half sword you'll turn your fist, pushing his sword down, and immediately cut a *riverso tondo* to his face, followed by a *riverso squalibro* with which you'll assume *coda lunga stretta*.

The counter to this is that when the enemy pushes your sword down, you'll immediately draw your right foot back a pace, turning a *riverso tramazzone* to the enemy's hand in that tempo, which will go into *coda lunga alta*.

And thus, by the grace of God we have brought an end to fencing with the unaccompanied sword.

Lep. I rest with great satisfaction thereof, but certain doubts remain which I'd like you to clarify for me (before we move on), and one of them is this: there are many who say that when acting in earnest one can't perform so many subtleties as there are in this art.

Gio. What do they mean by "subtleties"?

Lep. They say that one can't feint, nor disengage, and that there isn't enough time to perform body evasions and similar things.

Gio. They say such things because one rarely finds men who aren't moved by wrath or fear or something else when it comes to acting in earnest, which causes their intellect to become clouded and for this reason they can't employ them. But I say to you that if they don't allow themselves to be defeated by these circumstances, and they keep their heads, although they may be difficult, they'll do them safely.

Lep. But what's the reason for teaching them if they're so difficult to employ in earnest?

Gio. They're taught so that courageous men can avail themselves of them in the appropriate occasions. Because one often sees many who were somewhat timid and fearful, yet nonetheless were able to perform them excellently when done in play; but then they were unable to avail themselves of them when the [32verso] occasion arose in which to do them in earnest.

Lep. I believe it, because when one loses spirit, one consequently loses art as well. But tell me, if there were someone who had to settle a point of honor and owing to shortness

of time couldn't acquire full knowledge of the art, what course would you hold to be good?

Gio. I would train him in only one guard, and would make him always parry with the true edge of the sword and strike with a thrust.

Lep. And what guard would you train him in?

Gio. In porta di ferro stretta, followed then by guardia d'alicorno with the right foot forward; because even as all blows have their beginning in a guard, and then finish in another, this couldn't be done without doing so either, given that one can't throw an overhand thrust that doesn't begin in the said guard and end in porta di ferro; and for this reason that one's necessary, as well.

Lep. Why have you chosen porta di ferro?

Gio. For two reasons: one is that you almost never have to defend except on your right side. The other is that from this guard arise a great defense and a great offense, since one can defend oneself with a riverso from every blow that the enemy can throw, and harm him with an overhand thrust. And just as the parry with a riverso is stronger and easier, so is wounding with an overhand thrust deadlier and harder to defend against. And these are the reasons why I selected this guard.

Lep. Kindly tell me how, via the said riverso, to parry every blow that the enemy could throw, and then harm him with an overhand thrust.

Gio. I made mention of this in the discussion of the defenses that can be done in porta di ferro.

Lep. It's true that you'd made mention thereof, but it was amongst [33recto] the others. So if it wouldn't bother you, I'd like you to discuss it separately now, and tell me the way one can defend himself with the said riverso against the blows that the enemy can throw, so that I can grasp it better.

Gio. I'll discuss it in order to please you. Upon putting his hand to his sword, I'd want him to fix himself in guardia d'alicorno with his right foot forward. And once he's near his enemy, he'll thrust an imbriocata without any stepping, which will end in porta di ferro stretta. And I'll have him do this not in order to wound yet, but only in order to provoke the enemy to throw a blow, since in seeing the opening, he'll have a reason to respond.

Lep. But what if the enemy doesn't want to respond?

Gio. Then he should move a little bit toward the right, and in that motion return into guardia d'alicorno and thrust the imbriocata, whereupon he would be forced to respond or retreat. But I want us to propose the case that he responded with a mandritto to the

head. I'd make him advance a bit toward the enemy's right side with his left foot, and in that tempo parry the blow with a *riverso squalibro*, stepping promptly with his right foot and thrusting an *imbroccata* to the chest, with which he'll return into the said guard.

But if the enemy wants to wound him with a *riverso* to the head, I'd have him step with the left foot as I said and defend himself with a *riverso squalibro*, and immediately advance with the right foot and wound him with an *imbroccata* to the flank, and his sword will fall into the aforesaid guard.

But if he responds with a *riverso* to the leg, I would have him defend against that with a *riverso ridoppio*, following the same rule with regard to footwork, thrusting an *imbroccata* to the face with which he'll go into the aforesaid guard.

But when he pushes an overhand thrust, I'd make him direct his left foot forward somewhat [33verso] toward his right side, and defend against it with the true edge of the sword, then immediately glide forward with the right foot, and wound him in the chest with a similar thrust which will return him into the guard which we've been discussing.

But if perchance he threw a *stoccata* to the face, I'd make him step as I've said and protect himself from the said *stoccata* with a *riverso squalibro*, immediately sticking an *imbroccata* into his flanks, and then put himself back into *porta di ferro*.

And that's how I would proceed to train one by this method to parry and strike in two tempi, although I'd also train him to parry and strike in just one tempo, almost always having him step toward the enemy's right side, and I would want to make him well-versed in this.

Lep. This method pleases me, but tell me, wouldn't it also be good for him to practice in another guard?

Gio. It would be quite good for any occasion, if he had enough time; because if the enemy also stepped toward his left side, he'd almost have to change guards.

Lep. And which guard would you want him to practice changing into?

Gio. Into *coda lunga stretta*, because in it, too, he can parry nearly all of the enemy's blows with the true edge of his sword and attack with a thrust.

Lep. Since you indulged me in discussing *porta di ferro*, I hope you wouldn't mind also speaking of this other guard, and discuss the means that he should employ in parrying with the true edge of the sword and striking with a thrust, so that I can derive great satisfaction from this as well.

{On parrying with the true edge of the sword and striking with a thrust.}

Gio. When he's facing his enemy in *coda lunga stretta*, and he throws a *mandritto* to his head, he can parry in *guardia di faccia*, making his left foot push his right one forward, and in the same tempo he'll extend a thrust to his face and immediately return into the said guard.

But if he turns [34recto] a *riverso* to the head, he can go into *guardia d'entrare*, stepping forward somewhat with his left foot, and advancing with the right one all in one

tempo and thrusting the point into his chest; and having done so he'll put himself back into the aforesaid guard.

But If he responds with a mandritto to the leg, he can draw that back a bit, thrusting the point into his face in that instant and immediately return to the aforesaid guard.

But if perchance he thrusts an imbrogata, he can parry that with a mezzo mandritto, and promptly throw a punta riversa to his chest, making his left foot follow the right one, and immediately assume the guard which we discuss.

But if he wants to throw an underhand thrust, he can defend himself from that with the true edge of his sword, turning his body well behind his right side, and then wound him with a punta riversa; or he could go to encounter his enemy's sword with the forte of his true edge, turning his body as I've said, and thrust the point into his chest in that tempo, followed by a riverso which will return into coda lunga stretta.

And thereby with this method one could practice in the aforesaid guard as well.

Lep. How much time do you think it would take someone to learn this manner of parrying with the true edge of the sword and wounding with a thrust?

Gio. It depends on the person, because some are found who learn quickly, and some slowly. Nonetheless I have to believe that one could learn it in a month or a bit more; but I don't believe that he could avail himself of it safely.

Lep. Why not?

Gio. Because he wouldn't have experience in recognizing tempo yet, which, as I've told you, needs to be acquired through practicing with a variety of partners. From whence, for this reason, one can conclude that very rarely will there be anyone who acquires the said experience through practicing only with a Master, because he teaches for the purpose of [34verso] knowledge of the art, this being his principal profession. And so if he trained someone in order to make him experienced in such a brief period, he would need to be the rarest of Masters; otherwise that could happen which occurs to many who are fooled, being led to the field by their honor, having never practiced with anyone other than just their Master. Whereupon honestly thinking themselves to have it, once they'd then laid their hands on, they did that which nature dictated to them. And it all occurred because they didn't have experience in using the art, and also because they'd put off the necessity of learning it until the end.

Lep. Now that I've heard these discourses, and have assured myself of the merits of the variety of different opinions that I've heard so many times on this art of fencing, it would be good for us to move on, and, if you please, to discuss the accompanying arms tomorrow.

Gio. Most willingly; and our discussion will be of the sword and dagger, and then we'll follow with the sword and cape as well, so that once you've understood these different and most useful types well, you can more easily achieve understanding of all the others.

Lep. I will follow your opinion and do as you like.

THE FOURTH DAY
OF THE FIRST BOOK:

Which deals with the sword and dagger.

Gio. Since we've returned to the usual place, I'll begin to discuss the sword and dagger, as I promised you yesterday, [35recto] although you won't discover much that's new in these arms, since you've heard all the theory in the discussion of the single sword. And since it also applies to these, there will be no need to repeat it in its entirety. I'll only tell you the manner that you'll have to follow in putting yourself in guard with the dagger and with the sword, and also tell you some recommendations about parrying and attacking, so that I won't have to repeat the same thing every time. And then we'll discuss the defenses and offenses that can be done with these arms.

Lep. This is precisely my wish.

{Way of putting oneself in guard with the sword and dagger.}

Gio. Then I'll tell you that when you step in the guards, while your sword goes into coda lunga stretta, in the same tempo you'll go into cinghiale porta di ferro alta with your dagger. And when your sword is fixed in cinghiale porta di ferro, you'll fix your dagger in guardia di testa. But when your sword falls into porta di ferro <i.e. stretta, see p. 38recto>, you'll lower your dagger into coda lunga alta. And when you guide your sword into coda lunga alta, you'll also guide your dagger into porta di ferro alta. Then when you raise your sword into guardia d'alicorno, you'll lower your dagger into cinghiale porta di ferro. And this is the manner that you'll have to follow in adopting the guards whether stepping forward or back, and on the diagonal as well, which can be done similarly with the sword accompanied by the cape.

As for the recommendations, when you happen to parry with the dagger and you knock the enemy's sword to the outside, that is, toward his right side, and especially his thrusts, you'll hit it either with the flat or with the true edge thereof, depending upon the need, turning your wrist outwards well, and holding your arm well extended; but in the same tempo you'll turn your body behind your right side, because doing so you'll push the enemy's blows further away, [35verso] and protect yourself from them greatly. But when you knock it toward his left side, always hit it with the true edge of the dagger, turning your body in the opposite manner. And this is the first recommendation.

The second: as you move your dagger to parry, also move the sword to attack, always accompanying the foot with the hand together with rotations of the body, as I've said.

Third: when you want to join both weapons together in order to defend yourself, put your dagger on the inside of your sword, in such a fashion that its true edge touches the false edge of the said sword. Conjoined together, they'll come to make an "X", and over all hold your arms extended directly toward your enemy's face, for your greater safety.

Fourth and last: Once you've wounded your enemy, if he responds to your upper body and you want to protect yourself from his response with accompanied arms, you'll

follow the same rule as above. And also, when I speak of defending and offending hereafter, and I make mention of accompanying the arms together, you'll follow the same method told above, always making the dagger be on the inside of the sword, so that you'll have a great advantage, since you'll have your sword freer to be able to wound the enemy, and especially so with a *riverso*, and also when parrying your sword will be stronger by virtue of being supported by the dagger.

Lep. What size should this dagger be, that accompanies the sword?

Gio. You should avoid extremes, that is, it doesn't have to be either big or small, but of an honest length. But if you have to lean toward one of those extremes, I'd rather that you incline towards a bigger one, since you can parry with it more safely.

Lep. As for holding it in the hand, how do you want [36recto] it held?

Gio. Almost flat, making its true edge face somewhat toward your right side, because you'll keep your wrist freer to be able to push away the enemy's sword, and especially his thrust, in addition to which you'll have greater strength in parrying blows to the head, through the dagger being supported by your thumb. And what's more, holding it as I've said makes its hilt be a better defense.

Lep. Now that I've heard these recommendations, begin to speak to me of the defenses and offenses that can be done in them.

{Defense and offense of the sword and dagger together.}

Gio. First we'll present the case that you find yourself facing your enemy with your sword in *coda lunga stretta*, and your dagger in *cinghiale porta di ferro <alta>*, and that he throws a *mandritto* to your head. You'll step forward with your left foot and go into *guardia di testa* with your dagger in order to protect yourself, and thrust a *punta riversa* into his chest in the same tempo, followed by a *riverso* to the leg; or, once you've parried with the dagger, you can cut him with a *riverso* to the thigh, or turn a *mandritto* to the head or leg as you wish, and then you'll immediately withdraw your left foot back a pace, raising your weapons together into *guardia di testa* in order to secure yourself against the response that comes to your upper body, having done which, you'll return into the aforesaid guard. You can also parry with your weapons united, drawing your left foot near your right one in that tempo, knock the enemy's sword outwards with your dagger, and immediately advance with your right foot and slice him in the leg with a *riverso*; and for your protection, draw your right foot near to your left one, extending a thrust at him under your dagger, having done which, you'll put yourself back into the aforesaid guard. In addition to which you can defend yourself from the said *mandritto* with your sword accompanied by your dagger in *guardia di faccia*, advance with your right foot in that tempo, and [36verso] thrust the point into his face, having done which you'll settle yourself back into the guard named above.

But if he wants to wound you with a *mandritto* to your leg, you can defend yourself with the true edge of your dagger, lowering its point toward the ground, and gliding forward with your right foot all in one tempo, making your left one follow behind

the right one. You can also draw your right leg along side your left one, thrusting the point toward his face in the company of your dagger, and immediately return into the guard that we're discussing.

But if he turns a *riverso* to your head, you can parry it with the true edge of your sword, sticking an *imbrocata* in his flank, so that your left foot pushes your right one forward; or, after you've parried the blow with your sword, you can turn a *riverso*, either high or low, whichever seems better. Moreover, you can parry the said blow with your sword accompanied by your dagger in *guardia d'entrare*, stepping forward with your left foot, and advance and thrust the point in his chest all in one tempo. One can also defend said *riverso* with the sword, advancing somewhat with the right foot, then immediately passing forward with the left one, and giving him a thrust in the flank with the dagger; but once this is done, you'll return to the guards employed.

Now if perchance he throws a *riverso* to your leg, you can defend yourself with a *riverso ridoppio*, and immediately advance with your right foot and thrust an *imbrocata* into his face, making your dagger guard your head; having done which, you'll settle into your guards.

But if the enemy throws an overhand thrust, send your left foot forward and knock it toward your right side in that tempo with the true edge of your dagger, turning an overhand *riverso* to his head and making your right foot follow **[37recto]** behind. You can also draw your left foot near to your right one, and parry with a *mezzo mandritto*, then immediately advance with your right and thrust a *punta riversa*, or cut him with a *riverso tondo*, followed by another *riverso* with which you'll go into your said guards along with your dagger.

But if he throws a *stoccata*, you can knock that outwards with your dagger and step forward with your right foot in that tempo, thrusting the point into his chest, or giving him a *mandritto* to the leg. You can also withdraw your right foot back a pace and give him a *mezzo mandritto* to the sword hand in that tempo, and having done so, return to the aforesaid guards.

And this is the means you must follow in both defending yourself and offending the enemy when you're fixed with your sword and dagger in these two guards named above.

Now, coming to the second guards, when you have your sword in *coda lunga alta* and your dagger in *porta di ferro alta*, and your enemy throws a *mandritto* to your head, you'll raise your dagger into *guardia di testa*, and then, protecting yourself from it, you'll step forward with your right foot all in one tempo, thrusting your point into his chest; or, in stepping forward, you can give him a *mandritto squalibro* across his sword arm, and immediately return back a pace with your right foot with both weapons together, and put yourself back into the said guards. Moreover, in stepping forward with your right foot, you can parry the said blow with your weapons accompanying each other, and cut him with a *riverso* to the leg, making your dagger remain in defense of your head. Additionally, in the advance of your feet you can proceed to protect yourself from the said *mandritto* with your sword in *guardia di faccia*, together with your dagger, and thrust your point into his face in that tempo, having done which, you'll restore yourself into the aforesaid guards.

[37verso] But if he responds with a *mandritto* to your leg, you can parry it with the true edge of your dagger, lowering its point toward the ground, and in that instant

you'll step forward with your right foot and stick a stoccata into his face, followed by a mandritto to the leg; or draw your left leg back a pace, turning a riverso to his sword arm, and this accomplished, return into the guards named above.

But if he turns a riverso to your head, you'll parry it with the dagger, and immediately go forward with your right foot, thrusting a punta riversa to his chest, or cutting him with a riverso to the thigh. You could also parry the said blow with your sword in guardia d'entrare, supported with your dagger, and step forward in the same tempo and thrust the point into his face, then immediately return your right foot back, accompanying yourself with a thrust with which you'll settle into the aforesaid guards.

But if perchance he responds with a riverso to your leg, you'll draw your left foot near your right one, and thrust the point to his face in the same tempo. Beyond which, you can pass forward with your right foot toward his left side, turning a riverso squalimbro to his sword arm, having done which, you'll return into the guards whereof we speak. But if the enemy wants to wound you with an imboccata to the chest, you'll knock that toward his left side with the true edge of your dagger, and turn an overhand riverso to his head in that tempo, making your right foot follow behind your left one. Moreover, you could pass forward with your right foot, and in that passage parry the said thrust with a mandritto squalimbro, wounding his chest with a punta riversa, and for your shelter you'll return your right foot back a pace, raising both your weapons all in one tempo into guardia di testa, and [38recto] then you'll settle yourself into the guards of which we speak.

But if he throws an underhand thrust at you, you'll knock that outwards with the dagger, that is, toward his right side, stepping forward with your right foot in that tempo, and thrusting a stoccata to his flank, or turning a mandritto to his head or leg. Beyond which, while taking the step you could parry with the true edge of your sword and immediately cut him with a riverso to the face; or, while taking the step, you could adjoin the true edge of your sword with that of your enemy, and thrust the point into his chest. You could also draw your left foot back a pace, and wound him in the sword hand with a mezzo mandritto all in one tempo, and immediately return into the aforesaid guards. And I believe that now you've heard well how to parry and attack when you're facing your adversary arranged in them.

Lep. I've followed you quite well, so please continue.

Gio. Now, to continue with our discussion of the other guards, when you're facing your enemy with your sword in porta di ferro stretta and dagger in coda lunga alta, and he throws a mandritto to your head, you can pass forward with your left foot, and parry with your dagger in guardia di testa, and thrust a stoccata to his chest all in one tempo; or when parrying, give him a riverso to the thigh. Once you've parried with your dagger, you can also turn a mandritto to his leg, having done which, you'll return your left foot back a pace, with your weapons adjoined together, and you'll put yourself back into the aforementioned guards.

But when he wants to respond with a mandritto to your leg, you'll draw your right foot near to your left one, turning a tramazzone to his sword arm, or thrust the point into his face, and having done so, return into your guards.

But if he throws a *riverso* to your head, you'll immediately pass forward with your left foot, and [38*verso*] go with your dagger into *guardia di testa* to protect yourself, and in that tempo you'll give him a *riverso* to his leg, or a thrust to his chest. In addition to this, while stepping forward with your left foot, you can hit it with the true edge of your sword, accompanied by your dagger, thrusting the point into his face. You can also defend against it with a *riverso squalibro*, promptly stepping forward with your right foot, and wound him in the flank with an overhand thrust, immediately raising the dagger for defense of your head; having done which you'll reassume the guards employed.

But if perchance he responds with a *riverso* to your leg, you'll parry it with your sword with a *riverso ridoppio*, then immediately advance with your right foot, throwing an *imbroccata* to his face. You can also draw back your leg, and turn a *dritto tramazzone* to his sword hand in that tempo, and having done so return into the guards that are being discussed.

But if the enemy thrusts an *imbroccata* to your chest, you'll pass toward his right side with your left foot, and in this passage you'll hit it inward with the true edge of your dagger, turning a *riverso* to his head, so that your right foot follows behind your left one. It will also work out well if you parry it with the false edge of your sword, and turn a *riverso* to his leg, making your dagger guard your head. Beyond this, you can parry it with the true edge of your sword, and immediately step forward with your right foot and thrust the point into his chest, having done which you'll adopt the said guards.

But if he throws a *stoccata* to your face, you'll send your left foot forward, and defend against it with the true edge of your dagger, pushing it toward your enemy's left side, and in the same tempo you'll turn a *riverso* to his head. You could also glide your right foot forward, and go with your sword in the company of your dagger into *guardia d'entrare*, [39*recto*] thrusting the point into his face in that instant, and having done this, restore yourself to the previously named guards; to which many other defenses with the sword could be added, but since they're superfluous, I won't reiterate them.

Lep. Why are they superfluous?

Gio. Because having already shown to you in the discussion of the unaccompanied sword how to defend yourself from all the blows that can be thrown by the enemy, and the way to injure him, which (as I told you) also applies to these arts, whereof you'll be able to avail yourself at your ease, I won't repeat them to you. So, continuing, instead, to discuss the guards, I'll tell you that finding yourself with your sword in *cinghiale porta di ferro* and your dagger in *guardia di testa*, if your enemy throws a *mandritto* to your head, you can pass forward with your right foot and parry with the dagger, and thrust a *punta riversa* into his chest all in one tempo, or wound him in the head with an underhand *riverso*. You can also parry with your weapons adjoined, passing forward immediately with your right foot, thrusting an *imbroccata* to his face. Next, you can pass forward with your right foot and parry the said blow with the true edge of your sword, and wound him in the flank with an overhand thrust, having done which, you'll return back a pace with your right foot together with a *dritto tramazzone*, and fix yourself in the said guards.

But if he throws a *mandritto* to your leg, you'll draw back your left foot somewhat, thrust your point into his face in that tempo, and swiftly return into your guards.

And if he responds with a *riverso* to your head, you can parry it with your sword in *guardia d'entrare*, accompanied by your dagger, passing forward with your right foot in that instant and thrusting your point into his face. You can also step forward [39*verso*] with your right foot, and defend against it with a *riverso squalibro*, and then wound him with an *imbroccata* to the chest, or turn a *riverso* to his head or leg, promptly returning back with your right foot with your weapons adjoined in *guardia di testa*, and having done so settle yourself into the aforesaid guards.

But if perchance he throws a *riverso* to your leg, you can glide forward with your right foot and protect yourself with a *riverso ridoppio*, and throw a thrust to his face. Moreover, you could draw your left leg back a pace, and turn a *tramazzone* to his sword arm in the same tempo, having done which, you'll settle yourself in to the aforesaid guards.

But when the enemy throws an overhand thrust to your chest, you'll hit it toward his left side with the true edge of your dagger without taking any step, turning an overhand *riverso* all in one tempo, making your right foot follow behind your left one. You could also parry it with the false edge of your sword, and step forward with your right foot in the same tempo, turning a *riverso* to his leg, and having done so, return your right foot back a pace together with a thrust accompanied by your dagger, with which you'll return yourself into the guards whereof we speak.

But if he thrusts a *stoccata* to your face, you'll ward that with the true edge of your sword, stepping forward with your right foot, thrusting the point into his chest, or immediately upon having parried, you'll turn a *riverso* to his leg. During the taking of a step you could, moreover, place the forte of the true edge of your sword along with that of your dagger upon the said *stoccata* and immediately thrust your point into his face all in one tempo. Additionally, you can parry it with your dagger and cut his thigh with a *riverso*, and immediately return into the guards employed. And these are the defenses that can be done when you're in these guards of which we've now [40*recto*] spoken.

At present the *guardia d'alicorno* with the right foot forward remains to be discussed. When your sword is fixed therein and your dagger is in *cinghiale porta di ferro*, and your enemy wants to wound you with a *mandritto* to the head, you can pass forward with your left foot and raise your dagger into *guardia di testa*, with which you'll protect yourself from it. But in the same tempo, turn a *mandritto* to his head or leg, or thrust the point into his chest. While he throws the said *mandritto*, you can also step forward with your right foot and give him a *mandritto squalibro* to his sword hand, but having done so, you'll put yourself back into the aforesaid guards.

And if he throws a *mandritto* to your leg instead, you'll draw your right foot back a pace, thrusting an *imbroccata* into his face, or turn a *mandritto* to his right arm, having done which, you'll restore yourself into your guards.

But if he responds to you with a *riverso* to the head, you'll draw your left foot behind your right one **<this should probably be “near your right one”>**, and protect yourself in that tempo with your sword in the same guard, then immediately step forward with your right foot, thrusting the point into his chest and making your dagger lie in defense of your head. You can also step forward with your left foot and parry it with your dagger, and wound him with a *mandritto* to the leg, having done which, you'll return into the guards that we're speaking of.

But if your enemy turns a *riverso* to your leg, you'll draw your right foot back, throwing an *imbroccata* to his face, or turn a *mandritto* to his sword hand, and having done so, return into the said guards in use.

But if he throws an overhand thrust, you can parry it with a *mezzo mandritto*, and immediately cut him with a *riverso tondo*, making your left foot push your right one forward, after which you'll restore yourself [40verso] similarly to the said guards.

But if he throws a *stoccata* to your face, you'll hit it toward his right side with your dagger, drawing your left foot near your right one in that tempo, and immediately advance with your right foot, thrusting the point into his flank or turning a *mandritto* to his leg. Next, you can parry it with a *mezzo mandritto squalimbro*, and wound him in the chest with a *punta riversa*, and after this you'll return to the aforesaid guards.

Lep. This *guardia d'alicorno*, can't it also be done with the left foot forward?

Gio. It can, because its designation doesn't derive from the feet, but rather from the orientation of the sword.

Lep. I would also love to learn the defenses that can be done if I found myself in the said guard with my left foot forward.

Gio. I'll gladly tell them to you. Any time that you're facing your enemy with your sword in the said guard and your dagger in *porta di ferro alta*, and he throws a *mandritto* at your head, you can knock it outwards with your dagger and immediately pass forward with your right foot, and thrust an *imbroccata* into his chest or give him a *mandritto* to the head or leg, and having done so, return into the aforesaid guards.

But if he responds to you with a *mandritto* to your leg, you'll parry it with the dagger, lowering its point toward the ground, then immediately advance with your right foot, sticking an overhand thrust into his face, and then restore yourself to the same guards.

But if the enemy thrusts an *imbroccata* to your face, you'll hit it outwards with your dagger and step toward his left side with your right foot in that tempo, and wound him with a similar thrust to the flank, making your left foot follow your right one; or in the passing of your foot, you can turn a *mandritto* to his leg instead. Furthermore, it will be convenient for you to hit it toward his left side with your dagger [41recto] and thrust your point into his face in that tempo, or turn an overhand *riverso* to his head so that your right foot follows behind your left one, and this accomplished, you'll return back with your foot together with a *riverso* from beneath upwards, which will fix you in the aforesaid guards.

But if he thrusts a *stoccata* to your face, you'll parry that outwards with the flat of your dagger and advance with your right foot, thrusting an *imbroccata* to his chest or giving him a *mandritto* to his head or leg. As you see that thrust coming, you can also pass toward the enemy's left side with your right foot and throw an overhand thrust to his flank; and for your defense return your right foot back a pace accompanied by a *stoccata* under your dagger, and settle yourself into the guards we're discussing, of which you've heard the manner in which to defend yourself from *mandritti*, *riversi*, and thrusts, both high and low, when you're lying with your sword and dagger in whatsoever of the guards

named above. And because I've always maintained one fixed rule in discussing them, now I want to speak of varying among them.

Lep. This would also be exceedingly delightful to me.

Gio. Then, finding yourself with your sword in coda lunga stretta and your dagger in cinghiale porta di ferro <alta>, if your enemy thrusts a punta riversa to your face in order to give you a riverso to your leg, you'll defend yourself from the said thrust with the false edge of your sword. But when he turns the riverso, you'll immediately draw your right foot back a pace and turn a dritto tramazzone in that tempo to his sword arm, which will fall into cinghiale porta di ferro, and you'll go into guardia di testa with your dagger.

Now, if your enemy responds to you with a stoccata to your flank in order to give you a mandritto to your head, [41verso] you'll parry it with the true edge of your sword, but during the turning of the mandritto toward you, you'll swiftly direct your right foot forward, and go into guard <not specified> with your sword all in one tempo, thrusting the point into his face, followed by a dritto tramazzone with which you'll fix yourself in porta di ferro stretta with your dagger in coda lunga alta.

But if he feints a riverso to your head for the purpose of wounding you with a similar one to the leg, to the first one you'll raise your sword into guardia di testa, but in the turning of the second one, you'll draw your right foot back a pace and in one same tempo give him a riverso to his right arm, and thereby your sword will rest in coda lunga alta and your dagger in porta di ferro.

Now if he throws a mandritto to your head or leg (but we'll posit that it's to the head), you'll go into guardia di testa with your dagger in order to defend yourself, stepping promptly forward with your right foot, thrusting a stoccata to his chest. And if he throws it to your leg, you'll parry with the true edge of your dagger, lowering its point toward the ground, and you'll pass forward with your right foot in that instant, giving him a mandritto to the head or the leg which will be followed by a riverso ridoppio, and with it you'll thereby go into guardia d'alicorno, and your dagger will rest in cinghiale porta di ferro.

But if he happens to give you a false thrust to the face in order to wound you with a mandritto to the leg, you'll assure yourself against the said thrust with your dagger without moving your feet. And if he indeed wishes to wound you with the mandritto, you'll immediately draw your right foot back a pace, accompanied by a riverso from beneath upward, with which you'll restore yourself to guardia d'alicorno with the left foot forward, and with your dagger in porta di ferro alta.

Now if the enemy responds to you with a mandritto, or a riverso, or a thrust, [42recto] you can parry with your dagger and immediately advance toward his left side with your right foot and thrust the point into his chest, and with this I'll put an end to the variations of the guards, in which I've shown how they can be done. It is indeed true that they could be spoken of more extensively, but since we're studying briefly we'll refrain from discussing them more for now, especially since I want to show the method that you'll have to follow in provoking your enemy, and also in wounding him, when he doesn't want to throw any blows, so that you'll be able to avail yourself of it when the occasion arises.

Lep. You'll make me happy by doing so.

{The way to provoke and wound an enemy who doesn't want to throw any blows.}

Gio. I'll tell you then, that when you both have your swords in coda lunga stretta and daggers in cinghiale porta di ferro, and you want to provoke your enemy, you can deliver a falso and mandritto on his sword, or turn a tramazzone to his right hand which will halt in porta di ferro, and end with your dagger in coda lunga alta.

You could also throw a falso to his hands from beneath upwards, without taking any steps, or extend a false thrust to his face from under your dagger, followed by a mandritto to the leg, keeping your face well defended by your dagger.

Next, you could step forward toward his right side with your left foot, thrusting a punta riversa to his face in that tempo, and as he raises his sword to defend against it, you'll immediately go forward with your right foot, turning a mandritto tondo to his head; or, once you've extended the said thrust, turn a riverso to his leg.

Beyond which, you can throw a stoccata to his chest between his sword and dagger. And if perchance he knocks it inward with his dagger and passes forward with his left foot, turning a riverso to your head, you'll immediately pass forward with your left foot and proceed to parry it with your [42verso] sword, accompanied by your dagger in guardia d'entrare, thrusting the point into his face all in one tempo.

Similarly, you could press him by pulling your left foot near your right one and then immediately advancing forward with the same right one, so that finding himself at such a strait he'll either throw a blow or retreat backwards; and this is another manner of provoking your enemy which you can use against him when you're in whatsoever of the guards named above.

Lep. Can't this manner of pressing the enemy also be done with the unaccompanied sword?

Gio. It can, but it needs to be done with great judgment, owing to it being less safe, which isn't the case when done with the accompanied sword.

Now note the counters to the aforesaid provocations, which are: when he performs the falso and mandritto on your sword, you'll immediately step forward toward his left side with your right foot and turn a riverso tramazzone in that step, with which you'll return into your guards. But if he turns the tramazzone, draw back your hands and body somewhat, putting your weight on your back foot, letting his blow miss you, and immediately thrust your point into his face.

But if he throws the falso to your hands from beneath upwards, you can drive it toward the ground with the true edge of your sword, swiftly slicing him in the face with a riverso. But when he throws the false thrust to your left temple **<above, the blow is "a false thrust to his face from under your dagger">** in order to give you a mandritto to the leg, you can parry the said thrust with your dagger, and when he turns the mandritto, you'll go forward with your right foot, hitting it with the false edge of your sword, accompanied by your dagger, making its **<i.e. your sword's—"di essa">** point go towards the ground, and immediately slice him in the thigh with a riverso, or draw back your right foot a pace and give him a mezzo [43recto] mandritto to his sword hand in that tempo.

But if after the aforesaid thrust **<possibly the punta riversa feinted to the face, above; if so, the counter to the mandritto tondo to the head appears to have been omitted>** he turns a riverso to your leg, you can parry it with a riverso ridoppio, thrusting an imbrocata to his chest, or draw back your right foot, hitting his right arm with a riverso squalimbro all in one tempo.

But if he throws the stoccata to your chest, you'll immediately turn a riverso tramazzone to his sword arm, stepping diagonally with your right foot in that tempo, making your left foot follow behind it, and your sword will lie in coda lunga stretta and dagger in cinghiale porta di ferro.

Then if your enemy advances forward to press you, you can direct your right foot along the diagonal, turning your body behind your right side and turning a riverso tramazzone to his arms in the same tempo, or giving him a mezzo mandritto to the hands instead. And these are the counters to the aforesaid provocations.

Lep. I've understood them; thus, continue.

{Second manner of provoking and offending the enemy.}

Gio. Now, turning to the second manner of provoking the enemy, when both are lying with their swords in coda lunga alta and daggers in porta di ferro **<i.e. alta, see p. 35recto>**, you can provoke him with a falso dritto or two directed toward his dagger hand, and then advance with your right foot all in one tempo and thrust a punta riversa into his chest from outside his right side, followed by a riverso to the leg.

You can also advance with your right foot, throwing a mezzo mandritto to his dagger hand followed by a riverso squalimbro, or, during the advance, extend an overhand thrust with which you'll fix yourself in porta di ferro stretta with your dagger in coda lunga alta.

Next, during the advance of your right foot you can extend a false thrust to his face, followed by a mandritto to his leg; or, after [43verso] you've extended the said thrust, you can make a pretense of turning a mandritto to his head, but instead turn a riverso to his leg. And this is the second manner of provoking the enemy and also of wounding him, being in the two guards mentioned above.

Lep. How is the false thrust done?

{False thrust, and false mandritto.}

Gio. You extend the point of your sword with your arm well extended outside his left side, making its false edge go toward his face, turning your body behind your right side in that tempo. You can similarly perform a false mandritto, and a riverso as well, which are done while the blow is being thrown, because almost in striking him, in particular with the mandritto, the palm of the hand is turned downward, whereby one wounds with the false edge. And on the contrary, in throwing the riverso, the palm of the hand is turned upward, and they take these names for this reason.

Now, continuing onward with the counters to the said provocations, when your enemy throws the blow to your left hand with his false edge, you'll raise your dagger into guardia di testa and you'll put your sword into cinghiale porta di ferro, almost without moving your feet. But in the step that he takes in order to thrust the punta riversa, you'll

advance with your right foot, and in the same tempo you'll parry with the true edge of your sword, accompanied by your dagger, thrusting your point into his chest. In addition, without moving your feet you could turn a dritto tramazzone to his sword hand.

But when, as he steps forward with his right foot, he throws a mezzo mandritto at you in order to give you a riverso, you can parry it with your dagger; but during the turning of the riverso, you'll immediately step toward your enemy's left side with your right foot, turning a riverso tramazzone to his right arm in that tempo. But if he extends the imbrocata as he steps, you'll parry it with your dagger, **[44recto]** advancing somewhat toward his right side with your left foot, and you'll turn a riverso to his head all in one tempo, and your sword will return into coda lunga alta.

But when he extends the false thrust in order to give you a mandritto to the leg, you'll defend yourself from the said thrust with your dagger, and in the turning of the mandritto, you'll immediately pass forward toward his left side with your right foot, but during this step you'll stick an overhand thrust into his flank. Now, if during the advance of his foot he makes a pretense of giving you a mandritto and then immediately turns a riverso to your head, you'll raise your dagger into guardia di testa to the mandritto, but in the turning of the riverso you'll pass forward with your right foot, turning the true edge of your sword in the company of your dagger against the said blow, immediately thrusting your point into his face. But if after the aforesaid mandritto he turns the riverso to your leg, you can parry it with a riverso ridoppio, then immediately advance forward somewhat and wound him with an imbrocata to the chest. And these are the counters to the aforesaid attacks.

{Third manner of provoking and attacking.}

Now listen to the third manner of provoking and attacking the enemy, which is that when both of you have your swords in porta di ferro stretta and daggers in coda lunga alta, you can hit the false edge of your sword against that of the enemy and slice him in the face with a mandritto, making your left foot push the right one forward; or instead feint a dritto tramazzone to his head, nonetheless turning a riverso to his thigh.

You can also thrust a punta riversa to his face, passing forward with your left foot and immediately advancing with your right one, turn a riverso to his leg, or wound him in the flank with an overhand thrust. Moreover, you can throw the said thrust with a step of your right foot, and immediately pass forward with your left one and beat **[44verso]** his sword outwards under yours with your dagger, and give him a mandritto to the leg all in one tempo.

After this you can also extend two punte riverse; the first is done passing toward his right side with your left foot, extending it toward his face, and as he raises his sword in order to defend against it, you'll immediately advance with your right foot and beat his sword outward with your dagger, sticking the second one into his chest. And this is the third manner of provoking the enemy in these two guards.

Now listen to its counters. The first one will be that as he hits your sword with the false edge, you'll draw back your right foot, turning a mandritto to his sword hand all in one tempo, which will fall into cinghiale porta di ferro, and your dagger will go into guardia di testa. Second, during his feint of the tramazzone, you'll raise your dagger into guardia di testa, and as he turns the riverso to your thigh, you'll parry it with the true edge of your sword, lowering its point toward the ground, and immediately push an overhand thrust into his chest.

Third, when he thrusts the imbroccata, or turns the riverso instead **<note that no counter to this provocation's initial punta riversa to the face is described>**, you'll draw your right foot back a pace, turning a riverso squalimbro to his sword arm in that tempo. Fourth, during his extension of the aforesaid thrust with the right foot forward in order to give you a mandritto to the leg, you'll parry it with your sword in guardia d'entrare; but in the step forward that he takes with his left foot in order to beat with the dagger, in defense of it you'll draw your right foot back a pace, together with a riverso with which you'll go into coda lunga alta.

Fifth and last, when he extends the two thrusts, you'll defend against the first one with the false edge of your sword, but as he steps with his right foot in order to throw the second one, you'll immediately step toward his right side with your left foot, and hit him [45recto] with your dagger, but in the same instant you'll turn an overhand riverso to his head, making your right foot follow behind your left one. And with this I've brought the counters to these other provocations and attacks to an end.

{Fourth way of provoking and attacking.} **<note that this marginal is actually placed alongside the counters to these provocations>**

Now listen to the fourth, in cinghiale porta di ferro, which will be that when you and your enemy find yourselves lying with your swords in the said guard and your daggers in guardia di testa, you can extend a thrust to his face, stepping forward with your right foot, and follow it with a riverso to his leg. Or, instead, once you've extended the said thrust, you can turn two mandritti to his head, making the last one fall into porta di ferro alta.

Next, you can step forward with your right foot, and immediately turn a dritto tramazzone to his sword arm, or, in the step with the said foot, you can make a sign of throwing a punta riversa to his face, but nonetheless make a half turn of your fist, immediately thrusting an imbroccata into his flank. And these are the ways that you can provoke your enemy, being in these two aforesaid guards; which provocations are performed more in order to incite the enemy to respond than for any other reason.

Lep. Which of these provocations do you hold to be the more difficult? Those that are done with the unaccompanied sword, or these that are done with the sword and dagger?

{Provocations with the unaccompanied sword are more difficult than those with the sword and dagger.}

Gio. Those that are done with the unaccompanied sword, because one has to perform two effects with it, namely defense and offense. But when you have a dagger, you can parry with it and attack with the sword.

But to continue with the counters to the aforesaid provocations, when he extends the thrust to the face with the step forward of his right foot, you'll hit that with your dagger; but when he turns the riverso to your leg, you'll parry it with a riverso ridoppio, promptly stepping forward with your right foot, and in that tempo you'll thrust [45verso] an imbroccata to his face. But if he extends the thrust in order to wound you with a mandritto to the head, you'll parry it with your sword, and when he steps in order to wound you, you'll hit his sword arm with a mezzo mandritto, casting your left foot behind your right one.

But if he turns the tramazzone as he takes the step, you'll immediately step forward with your right foot, and parry with your sword in guardia d'entrare in the company of your dagger, extending a thrust to his chest all in one tempo. Now if he throws a punta riversa instead, you'll hit that with the false edge of your sword. But in his thrusting of the imbroccata, you'll parry that with a riverso ridoppio, stepping forward with your right foot in that instant, wounding him in the face with an overhand thrust. And these are their counters.

{Fifth manner of provoking and offending.}

Now coming to the fifth manner of provoking the enemy, when both have their swords in guardia d'alicorno with their right feet forward and their daggers in cinghiale porta di ferro, you can thrust an imbroccata to the dagger hand and follow it with a dritto tramazzone, with which you'll fix yourself in porta di ferro stretta with your dagger in coda lunga alta; or, while thrusting the said imbroccata, you'll draw back your right foot a pace, and your sword will rest in cinghiale porta di ferro, and your dagger in guardia di testa.

You can also make a gesture of extending the overhand thrust, but instead turn a mandritto to his left hand, which will fall into porta di ferro larga, raising your dagger in defense of your head. And this is the manner of provoking your enemy, when you find yourself in the two guards named above.

Lep. These provocations seem to me to be nothing other than changes of guards.

Gio. It's true; because in these two guards of alicorno, nothing else can be done in order to provoke the enemy than [46recto] pressing him, making feints, or making changes of guards, so that he'll have reason to move himself or respond.

But note the counters to the aforesaid provocations, of which the first one is that when he thrusts the imbroccata, you'll pass toward the enemy's right side with your left foot, and in this passage you'll stretch out your left arm somewhat and beat it inward with your dagger, but in the same tempo you'll turn an overhand riverso to his head, with which you'll fix yourself in coda lunga alta, and your dagger in porta di ferro.

Second, when he draws back his right foot and extends the overhand thrust, you can feint to respond to it, and when he reacts to the feint, you can wound him wherever turns out to be the easiest.

Third, in his pretense of thrusting the imbroccata, you won't move yourself, but when he turns the mandritto, you'll immediately cast your right foot back a pace, and in one tempo you'll turn a mandritto squalimbri to his sword hand, which will fall into cinghiale porta di ferro, and your dagger will go into guardia di testa.

And these are the counters to the aforesaid provocations. Now there remains the sixth and final guard, which is that of alicorno with the left foot forward, and then I want us to move on.

Lep. I bow to your wishes.

Gio. Then finding yourself in the said guard with your enemy, and with your dagger in porta di ferro alta, and you being the provocateur, you can draw your right foot near your left one, then glide forward with the same one, so that when your enemy finds himself so

pressed, he'll either throw a blow or retire backwards. But I want us to address the case first that he either throws a cut or a thrust at your upper body: you will protect yourself with your dagger, and step forward in that tempo with your right foot, thrusting an *imbroccata* to his chest, [46verso] or as your foot takes the step, you can make a gesture of thrusting your point to his face, and all in one tempo you'll turn a *mandritto* to his leg, which will fall into *porta di ferro*, and your dagger will defend your head. And now I will make an end.

Lep. Don't you want to tell me the counters first?

Gio. Yes, I do. The counter is that when he glides forward with his foot in order to press you, you'll immediately direct your right foot toward his left side, thrusting the point of your sword into his left hand, with which you'll fix yourself in *porta di ferro stretta*, and your dagger in *guardia di testa*. But when steps forward with his right foot and thrusts the *imbroccata*, you'll immediately step toward your enemy's right side with your left foot, and in one same tempo you'll hit the said *imbroccata* with the true edge of your dagger, turning an overhand *riverso* to his head, which will fall into *coda lunga alta*, and your dagger into *porta di ferro alta*. But if he feints to thrust the *imbroccata*, you won't make a motion, but as he turns the *mandritto* to your leg, you'll draw your left foot back a pace, hitting the said hand with a *mezzo mandritto* in that instant. And thus with divine aid we have brought to an end the discussion of the sword accompanied by the dagger.

But because it is precisely the hour to go see the joust, I invite you to discuss the sword and cape with me tomorrow.

Lep. Let's go; and I accept your invitation for tomorrow, in order to understand how to avail myself of the sword and cape, something I greatly desire.

[47Recto] THE FOURTH DAY OF THE FIRST BOOK:

Which deals with the way to avail oneself of the sword and cape.

Lep. What do you have to say, M. Giovanni, about the joust that those riders performed?

Gio. For being new jousters, they tilted with their lances quite well, but they would have tilted better if the ring had been positioned reasonably.

Lep. In what way was it positioned unreasonably?

Gio. I don't want to discuss this now, because first I want to explain to you what can be done with the sword and the cape, and then tomorrow we'll discuss tilting with the lance, of which I promise to tell you all that I understand.

Lep. This will also be especially dear to me. So begin to discuss the sword and cape, to which I'll attend.

Gio. First I want to tell you the method you have to use in embracing the cape, as well as in stepping with it. And then we'll discuss defending yourself from all the blows that your enemy can throw, and attacking him, finding yourself in whatsoever of the six guards named above. And having always followed one firm rule in discussing them, for easier understanding, I'll continue thus with these as well.

{How the cape is wound about the arm.}

So, when you have your cape about you, you'll let it fall down from your right shoulder as far as the middle of your left arm, and then you'll turn your left hand outwards, coiling the said cape upon your arm, putting yourself into *cinghiale porta di ferro* with it, and in *coda lunga stretta* with your sword.

Then insofar as concerns stepping in the guards, you'll follow that [47verso] same rule that you followed with the sword and dagger, since this stepping, along with the placement of yourself in the guards is all one same procedure, except that in parrying there is a difference, because the cape can be cut and pierced, which the dagger cannot. Therefore I want to advise you that when you happen to parry either *mandritti* or *riversi* with your cape in defense of your upper body, you are to parry your enemy's sword below its midpoint, before the blow has gained force. But when you happen to parry thrusts with the cape, you'll beat them away either to the right or the left side with a turning of your body as you understand, so that you'll render yourself safer thereby.

Now, coming to the discussion of defending yourself from your enemy and offending him, when you find yourself facing your enemy with your sword in *coda lunga stretta* and your cape in *cinghiale porta di ferro*, and he throws a *mandritto* to your head, you'll step forward with your left foot and defend yourself from that with your cape, thrusting a *punta riversa* to his chest in that instant, followed by a *riverso* to his thigh; or, while you protect yourself with your cape, you can give him a *mandritto* to the leg, and for your defense you'll draw back your left foot a pace, extending a thrust to his face in the company of your cape, and having done so, you'll settle yourself into the said guard. You can also parry the said blow with your sword in *guardia di testa* accompanied by your cape, withdrawing your left foot near your right one in that tempo, then immediately go forward with your right one, and turn a *mandritto* to his head or his leg, and having done so, return into the aforesaid guard.

But if he throws a *mandritto* to your leg, you'll draw back your right foot somewhat, wounding him with a *riverso squalimbro* to his sword arm, and thrusting the point [48recto] to his face in the company of the cape. You can moreover defend yourself from the said blow with the false edge of your sword and cut him with a *riverso* to his thigh, making your cape protect your head, and then immediately returning into the guard named above.

But if he wants to wound you with a *riverso* to the head, you can pass toward his left side with your left foot and parry with the cape, and in the same tempo thrust a *stoccata* to his chest or give him a *riverso* to the leg. In addition to this, in your step with your left foot you could go into *guardia d'entrare* with your sword, accompanying it with your cape, and thrust your point into his face all in one tempo, having done which you'll restore yourself into the same aforesaid guard.

And if instead he responds to you with a *riverso* to your leg, you can hit it with the true edge of your sword, and immediately advance with your right foot and thrust an *imbroccata*, or draw back your right foot instead, wounding him with a *dritto tramazzone*

to his sword arm, or giving him a thrust to the face, and having done so restore yourself into the same guard.

But if perchance he throws an overhand thrust, you'll parry it with a mezzo mandritto squalibro, turning a riverso to his head in response, or a punta riversa to his chest, making your left foot follow behind your right one. You can also parry it with the false edge of your sword, and immediately cut him with a riverso to the leg, so that your left foot pushes your right one forward. In addition, you can step toward his right side with your left foot and beat it inward with your cape, turning an overhand riverso to his head in that tempo, having done which you'll arrange yourself into the guard whereof we speak.

But if he throws a stoccata to your chest, you'll beat it outwards with your cape, then immediately direct your right foot forward, extending a thrust to his flank all in one tempo, or [48verso] parry it with the true edge of your sword, and turn a riverso to his head, together with a mandritto to the leg. Moreover, by lowering the point of your sword well toward the ground, accompanying it with the cape, and then making it turn upwards in the manner of a wheel, you'll repel the said stoccata; but all in one tempo you'll advance with your left foot, sticking your point in his face, and having done so you'll return into the guard employed. And this is the manner of defending yourself from your enemy, and attacking him, finding yourself in the guard of coda lunga stretta.

Lep. I understand this manner of parrying and striking when I'm in the aforesaid guard. Now speak on of the others.

Gio. The second guard will be coda lunga alta. When you're facing your enemy with your sword fixed in it and with your cape in porta di ferro alta, if he throws a mandritto to your head, you can glide forward with your left foot and parry it with your cape, and immediately advance with your right foot, and thrust a stoccata to his flank, or give him a mandritto to his sword arm instead, following it with a riverso, and having done so you'll return into the said guard. You can also step forward with your right foot and parry with your sword in guardia di testa, and immediately turn a mandritto to his head or leg, or in the step you can go into guardia di faccia with your sword accompanied by your cape, and thrust the point into his face in that tempo, and having done so draw back your right foot a pace together with a mandritto which will go into cinghiale porta di ferro; then you'll turn your hand and body to find yourself in coda lunga alta.

But if he throws a mandritto to your leg, you'll step forward toward his right side with your right foot, and ward against the said blow with the false edge of your sword, but you'll slice his thigh with a riverso without delay, [49recto] or turn a dritto tramazzone to his head instead, which will fall into porta di ferro, with your cape in guardia di testa, and you'll promptly draw back your right foot, followed by a thrust with which you'll return into the aforesaid guard. In addition, you could draw back your left leg and thrust your point into his face in that tempo in the company of your cape, having done which, you'll settle yourself into the aforesaid guard.

But when he wants to wound you with a riverso to the head, you'll pass forward with your right foot and protect yourself with your cape, but in the same tempo you'll throw a punta riversa to his chest, or cut him in the leg with a riverso. It also works well as you take a step to parry with your sword in guardia di testa, and thrust an imboccata

or turn a mandritto to his thigh, and having done so return into the same guard named above.

And yet if he responds to you with a riverso to your leg, you'll step forward with your right foot, but as you step you'll hit it with a riverso ridoppio, and in response you'll throw an overhand thrust to his face; or go toward his left side with your right foot instead, and in that tempo you'll turn a riverso to his head followed by another riverso, with which you'll return into the guard whereof we speak.

But if the enemy throws an overhand thrust at you, passing forward with your right foot you'll hit that with the true edge of your sword, and wound him in the chest with a punta riversa, making your left foot follow behind your right one. You can also knock it inward with your cape, stepping diagonally somewhat with your left foot, turning an overhand riverso to his head in that instant, with which you'll return into coda lunga alta.

And if perchance he wants to wound you with an underhand thrust, you'll knock that outwards with your cape, and in that tempo you'll advance with your right foot and throw a thrust to his face followed by a mandritto **[49verso]** to his leg. Similarly, in the step forward with your foot, you can go into guardia di faccia with your sword and thrust the point into his face; or, once you've parried in guardia di faccia, you can direct your left foot toward his right side, turning a riverso to his leg in that tempo, in such a fashion that your right foot follows behind your left one, and for your defense you'll thrust a stoccata to his face in the company of your cape, with which you'll settle into the guard employed. And these are the defenses and offenses that you can perform in the said guard.

But note these other defenses in the third guard, which will be porta di ferro stretta. Finding yourself fixed in it with your sword, and with your cape in coda lunga alta, if your enemy throws a mandritto to your upper body, you'll step forward with your left foot, blocking the said blow with your cape, and thrust a punta riversa to his chest in the same tempo followed by a riverso to the thigh; or during the parry you'll turn a mandritto to his leg and immediately draw back your foot with a thrust accompanied by your cape, having done which, lowering your hand, you'll return into the aforesaid guard with your sword. Additionally, while you defend yourself with your cape, you could throw a stoccata to his flank. Moreover, you could parry the said mandritto with your sword in guardia di faccia in the company of your cape, thrusting the point to his face and following it with a dritto tramazzone with which you'll go into porta di ferro stretta.

But if he throws a mandritto to your leg, you'll draw your right foot near your left one, sticking the point in his face, and returning immediately into the aforesaid guard.

But when your enemy wants to wound you with a riverso to your head, you'll go forward with your left foot and protect yourself with your cape, but in that tempo you'll give him a riverso to the leg, or thrust your point into his **[50recto]** chest. Next, in the step you take with your foot, you can parry the said blow with your sword in guardia d'entrare accompanied by your cape, thrusting a stoccata to his face. Similarly, you could parry it with a riverso squalibro, and then wound him with an imbrocata to the flank, or turn a riverso to his head, making your left foot push your right one forward, and immediately place yourself in the aforesaid guard.

But if perchance he throws a *riverso* to your leg, you can parry it with a *riverso ridoppio* and thrust an *imbroccata* to his chest, or draw back your right foot, and throw the said *imbroccata* to his face, and having done so you'll return into *porta di ferro stretta*.

And if he throws an overhand thrust at you, you'll pass toward his right side with your left foot, knocking it inward with your cape, and in that tempo you'll turn an overhand *riverso* to his head in such a way that your right foot follows behind your left one; then you'll immediately return backward a pace with your left foot, together with a *mandritto squalimbro* which will return into the aforesaid guard. In the step of your foot you can also hit it with the true edge of your sword, advance with your right foot, and wound him with an *imbroccata* to the flank which will end in *porta di ferro*.

But if the enemy throws a *stoccata* in order to give it to you in the chest, you can glide forward with your right foot, placing the *forte* of the true edge of your sword together with your cape upon that of your enemy, and thrust the point into his chest in that tempo, making your left foot be the follower of your right one, and then with a *dritto tramazzone* you'll return into the aforesaid guard. Next, you can also hit it toward your enemy's left side with your cape, stepping forward with your left foot in the same tempo, and giving him a *riverso* to the leg or a *punta riversa* to the chest; **[50verso]** and this done, return into the guard whereof we speak. And this is the way to defend yourself from the aforesaid blows and harm the enemy, finding yourself in *porta di ferro stretta*.

Now listen to these others, in *cinghiale porta di ferro*. If your sword is placed in it and your cape is in *guardia di testa*, and your enemy throws a *mandritto* to your head, you'll step forward with your right foot and defend yourself with your cape, but all in one tempo you'll wound him with a *riverso* to the thigh or a thrust to the chest, having done which you'll return your right foot back a pace, turning a *mandritto* to your enemy's hand, and this will fix you into the said guard and your cape will return to the defense of your head. In the advance of your foot you can also parry with your sword in *guardia di faccia* in the company of your cape, and thrust the point into his face and immediately draw back your foot a pace, accompanying it with a *dritto tramazzone* which will end in the guard named above.

Yet if he responds with a *mandritto* to the leg you can draw back your left foot and give him what ever seems most opportune to you in that tempo, and having done so you'll return into your guard.

But if he throws a *riverso* to your head, you'll advance toward his left side with your right foot, parrying the said blow with your cape, and in that tempo you'll give him a *riverso* to the leg or a *punta riversa* to the chest, and for your defense you'll draw your right foot back a pace and accompany it with a *mandritto* with which you'll return into the guard whereof we speak. You can also hit it with a *riverso squalimbro* in the advance of your foot and wound him with an *imbroccata* to the flank, or go into *guardia d'entrare* with your sword in the company of your cape, thrusting your point into his face, then immediately return **[51recto]** back together with a *mandritto tramazzone*, with which you'll adopt the indicated guard.

But if he wants to wound you with a *riverso* to the leg, you can defend yourself with a *riverso ridoppio*, stepping with your right foot and turning a *riverso* to his head or thrusting the point into his face, and having done so restore yourself into the aforesaid guard.

And if mayhap the enemy thrusts an imbroccata to your chest, you'll hit it with the false edge of your sword, promptly passing forward with your right foot, and in that tempo you'll turn a riverso to his thigh, making your cape defend your head; or you'll parry it with the true edge of your sword, thrusting the point into his flank. Similarly, you can hit it toward his left side with your cape and turn an overhand riverso to his head, making your right foot follow behind your left one, and for your defense you'll turn a mandritto squalibro which will end in cinghiale porta di ferro.

But if he throws an underhand thrust, you'll pass forward with your right foot and parry it with the true edge of your sword in the company of your cape, and thrust the point into his chest in that tempo. You can also hit it with the cape and turn a riverso to his sword arm, or parry it with a riverso squalibro instead, stepping forward and giving him a riverso to the head or throwing an overhand thrust to his face. Beyond which, in the step of your foot you could parry it with your false edge, and immediately turn your fist downward and thrust your point into his face, and having done so return into cinghiale porta di ferro with your sword and into guardia di testa with your cape. And these are the defenses that you can perform in this guard.

Now hear that which can be done in the fifth guard, which will be that of alicorno with the right foot forward. Being fixed therein and finding yourself with your cape in **[51verso]** cinghiale porta di ferro, if your enemy wants to wound you with a mandritto to the head, you'll step forward with your left foot and protect yourself with your cape in guardia di testa, but you'll immediately advance with your right foot and thrust an imbroccata to his chest, or turn a mandritto to his head or leg. Next, you can turn a mandritto to your enemy's arm, or parry with your sword in guardia di testa accompanied by your cape, and immediately wound him however seems readiest, and having done so you'll place yourself back in the guard named above.

But if he throws a mandritto to your leg you'll draw your right foot near your left one, and in that tempo you'll turn a mandritto to his sword arm or thrust the point into his face, promptly returning into the aforesaid guard.

And if he responds to you with a riverso to the head, you can pass forward with your left foot and parry the said blow in guardia d'entrare in the company of your cape, thrusting the point into his face; or in the step forward you can parry with your cape, giving him a mandritto to the leg in that tempo, and having done so, you'll settle yourself into the guard whereof we speak.

But if he throws a riverso to your leg, you'll draw back your right foot, throwing an imbroccata to his face in the same tempo, and swiftly return into guardia d'alicorno.

Now if perchance he throws an overhand thrust to your chest, you'll draw your left foot near your right one and parry it with a mezzo mandritto squalibro, then immediately advance with your right foot and slice his head with a riverso, or throw a thrust to his chest. Moreover, you can pass toward his right side with your left foot and hit the said thrust with your cape, turning an overhand riverso to his head, having done which you'll go into the aforesaid guard.

[52recto] But when the enemy throws a stoccata in order to give it to you in the chest, you'll beat it outwards with the cape, drawing your left foot near your right one, then immediately advance with your right one, thrusting an imbroccata to the face, or turning a mandritto to his leg instead.

And with this I've finished the explanation of the five guards named above.

Lep. Don't you want to talk about the guardia d'alicorno with the left foot forward as well?

Gio. I'll speak about it in order to satisfy you, although there isn't much difference between the one and the other. Finding yourself with your sword in the said guard and your cape in porta di ferro alta, if your enemy throws a mandritto to your head, you'll protect yourself with your cape, then immediately pass forward with your right foot, thrusting your point into his chest or turning a mandritto to his leg as you step, instead; and having done so you'll return back a pace with your right foot together with a riverso ridoppio, with which you'll fix yourself in the said guard.

But if he responds to you with a mandritto to your leg, you'll pass toward his left side with your right foot and thrust an imbriocata to his face in that tempo or give him a riverso to his sword hand, so that that your left foot follows behind your right one, having done which you'll return into the aforesaid guard.

And if instead he throws a riverso to your head, you can parry with your cape, stepping forward promptly with your right foot and thrusting the point into his flank or turning a mandritto to his head or leg, and immediately place yourself back into the aforesaid guard.

But if perchance he wants to wound you with a riverso to the leg, you'll draw back your left foot and speedily advance with your right one, throwing an overhand thrust to his face, having done which you'll restore yourself into the guard named above.

Now when the enemy throws an imbriocata to your chest, you can hit it [**52verso**] toward his left side with your cape and turn an overhand riverso to his head in the same tempo, or thrust the point into his face, making your right foot push your left one forward. In the step with your right foot you can also parry with a mandritto squalibro and cut him with a riverso tondo in the same tempo, or thrust a punta riversa to his chest, and having done so return into the aforesaid guard.

But if he thrusts a stoccata to your face, you'll hit it outwards with your cape and pass forward with your right foot in that tempo, thrusting the point into his face, or turn a mandritto to his leg instead, having done which you'll return into the guard whereof we speak.

And here I'll make an end to the explanation of the sixth and final guard, of which, along with the other aforesaid ones, I've shown you the manner that you have to follow in defending yourself from your enemy and in offending him, when he wants to wound you with a cut or a thrust, be it high or low, when you have your sword accompanied by the cape in whatsoever of the guards named above.

But because I've always discussed the simple blows, for easier understanding, now I want to discuss feints, together with the variations of the guards, so that you'll come to be more capable of them.

Lep. I would find this excellent as well.

{The way in which feinted blows must be parried.}

Gio. So then, when you are facing your enemy with your sword in coda lunga alta and your cape in cinghiale porta di ferro, and he wants to throw two punte riverse, one at your

face with his left foot forward, and the other to your chest with his right foot forward, you'll parry the first one with your false edge, and as he throws the second one, you'll pass immediately toward his right side with your left foot, and beat that one inward with your cape, turning an overhand *riverso* to his head all in one tempo, with which [53recto] you'll restore yourself into *coda lunga alta*.

Now if the enemy thrusts a *stoccata* to your face in order to give you a *mandritto* to the leg, as he throws the thrust you'll defend yourself from that with your cape; but in the turning of a *mandritto* at you, you'll draw your left foot back, wounding your enemy's hand with a *mezzo mandritto* with which you'll fix yourself in *porta di ferro stretta*, and with your cape in *coda lunga alta*.

And if he feints to thrust a *punta riversa* to your face in order to give you a *riverso* to the leg, you won't move in response to the feint, but as he turns the *riverso*, you'll immediately draw back your right foot a pace, turning a *dritto tramazzone* to his sword arm in that tempo, with which you'll go into *cinghiale porta di ferro* with your cape in *guardia di testa*.

But if the enemy makes a show of giving you a *dritto tramazzone* to the head, you'll raise your sword into *guardia di testa*, and if he thrusts an *imbroccata* to your flank as you raise it, you'll hit it with your cape and turn an overhand *riverso* to his head in the same tempo, making your right foot follow behind your left one. And having done so, with a half turn upwards of your fist, you'll rest with your left foot forward with your sword in *guardia d'alicorno*, and your cape in *porta di ferro alta*.

Now if he responds to you with a *mandritto squalibro* to your upper body, you'll protect against that with your cape, and rapidly pass forward with your right foot, but in that passage you'll throw an overhand thrust to his chest, followed by a *riverso ridoppio*, with which you'll fix yourself in *guardia d'alicorno* with your right foot forward, and with your cape in *cinghiale porta di ferro*.

And if your enemy throws a thrust to your face, or a *mandritto tondo* to your head, you'll step forward with your left foot and hit that with your cape, but in the same tempo you'll turn a [53verso] *mandritto* to his leg, and for your defense you'll restore your left foot back a pace, accompanied with a *riverso tramazzone* with which you'll return into *coda lunga stretta*.

I could also tell you many other defenses in this and the other guards, but in order to make it brief, for now we'll let the discussion above suffice. Up until now I've spoken to you of defending yourself from the enemy and of offending him, but now I want to talk to you about how to provoke him and wound him, together with the way to protect yourself from the said provocations when he wants to do them against you, so that you'll be able to avail yourself of them according to the occasions in which they can occur to you.

Lep. This kindness of yours is such that I will be eternally grateful to you.

{On provoking and wounding the enemy and defending oneself from his provocations in the guard coda lunga stretta.}

Gio. Let's leave this aside, and continue our discussion. You have to understand that when you find yourself with the swords in *coda lunga stretta* and the capes in *cinghiale porta di ferro*, and you want to be the first one to provoke your enemy, you can pass

forward with your left foot and thrust a punta riversa to the face; but if perchance he raises his sword in order to protect himself, in the raising you'll immediately direct your right foot forward and hit that upward with your cape, and in the same tempo you'll thrust a punta riversa to the chest, or cut him in the leg with a riverso instead. During the advance of his right foot you can also make a pretense of giving him a mandritto to the head, but turn a riverso to his thigh.

Similarly, you can pass forward with your left foot and provoke him with a dritto tramazzone to his sword hand, with which you'll fix yourself in cinghiale porta di ferro, and with your cape in guardia di testa. You can also provoke him if you throw either thrusts or mezzi riversi to his cape hand.

Additionally, you can make a gesture of thrusting a stoccata to his face between his sword and his cape, and if he happens to move [54recto] his sword in order to defend himself, you'll immediately pass forward with your left foot, and in that passage you'll toss the cape on his right arm and in the same tempo turn an overhand riverso to his head, or thrust a punta riversa to his flank instead. Next, in the step of your left foot, you can cast your cape into his face, keeping, however, that first part of the cape that you gripped in your hand firmly in your fist, and in that casting give him a mandritto to his leg, or a stoccata to his chest, and immediately embrace the said cape again. But if he hits the said thrust with his cape, you'll promptly draw your right foot back a pace, together with a dritto tramazzone that will fall into cinghiale porta di ferro, and you'll proceed to defend your head with your cape.

And these are the provocations and attacks that can be done in coda lunga stretta. Now hear their counters.

Lep. Before you begin, I would first like you to tell me if there are other ways of casting the cape and of embracing it as well.

{How the cape is embraced.}

Gio. There are two other ways to embrace it. One is that having your cape about you, you'll let it fall down from your right shoulder, beating it backward with your arm, and in the same tempo you'll stick the thumb of your left hand on the other part of the cape, that's on your left shoulder, making the pad of your thumb be turned upwards. And you'll put yourself into porta di ferro with your sword; and this is one way to avail yourself of it for casting it at your enemy without embracing it: which is that being fixed in the said guard, if your enemy throws either a cut or thrust, you'll hit the said blow toward his left side with the true edge of your sword, but all in one tempo you'll step forward with your left foot, casting your cape in his face from off your shoulder, holding it tightly in your fist however, and in that casting [54verso] you'll thrust an imbrogata to his chest, or give him a mandritto to the legs; and having done so, wanting to embrace it again, you'll turn your left hand toward the outside, recovering it onto your arm, and you'll place yourself in cinghiale porta di ferro with it, and in coda lunga stretta with your sword.

The other is, having it likewise about you, you'll take that part that hangs down on your left side with your left hand, almost by the corner, and then with your other hand you'll take the other side, likewise of the bottom of the cape, turning it back and redoubling it onto your left arm, holding both corners however in your left hand. Then,

with your right hand, you'll take all of that part of the said cape that remains below, and will turn it inward upon your arm, arranging it with lovely grace. Having done so, you'll put yourself into porta di ferro with it, and in coda lunga alta with your sword. And then, wanting to avail yourself of it in order to cast it at your enemy, you'll draw your left foot back a pace and in the same tempo you'll extend your arm backwards, making a turn of your hand. By that turning you'll make that last part that you turned onto your arm return to hanging low, and this is done so that you'll have the cape free to be able to cast it, keeping that first part that you gripped firmly in hand, however. And cast it with your arm open, so that you'll cover your enemy greatly thereby.

Lep. Now that I've heard the ways that I have to follow in embracing the cape and casting it as well, continue your discussion of the counters of the aforesaid provocations.

Gio. These are the counters. As he throws the thrust with his left foot forward, you'll parry that with your true edge, and as he raises his cape in order to thrust the other one, immediately going toward his left side with your left foot [**55recto**] you'll hit it with your cape, and in the same tempo you'll turn an overhand riverso to his head. But if after he's thrown the aforesaid thrust he wants to wound you with a riverso to the leg, in defense against the thrust you'll hit that with your false edge; but in the turning of the riverso, you'll draw your right foot behind your left one, giving him a riverso squalimbros to the sword arm in that tempo. But if he feints a mandritto in order to give you a riverso to the head **<the provocation specified a mandritto to the head followed by a riverso to the thigh>**, without stepping you'll wound him in the sword hand with a mezzo mandritto, and for defense from the riverso you'll go into guardia d'entrare with your sword, thrusting your point into his face.

Now as he steps with his left foot and turns the tramazzone, you'll immediately go into porta di ferro with your sword in order to render yourself secure. But if he throws the thrust to your cape hand, you'll lift up your left arm somewhat, turning your body behind your right side, wounding your enemy's hand with a mezzo mandritto in that tempo.

Then, when he wants to throw the thrust between your sword and your cape, you'll knock that down with your true edge. But in the step that he takes with his left foot in order to enfold you in his cape or cast it into your face, you'll promptly draw your right foot back a pace, slicing him in the leg with a riverso in that tempo, making your cape protect your head. And these are the counters.

Now note the second manner of provoking the enemy, when both of you have your swords in coda lunga alta and your capes in porta di ferro alta. You can pass forward with your right foot and provoke him with a falso and a mandritto, with which you'll fix yourself in porta di ferro, and with your cape in coda lunga alta. After you've stepped with the aforesaid foot you can also feint a thrust to his face over your cape, and immediately turn a mandritto to his leg, or thrust a [**55verso**] punta riversa instead, followed by a riverso to his leg with which you'll go into coda lunga stretta with your cape in cinghiale porta di ferro, and with these provocations he'll be forced to respond to you.

Lep. But what if he doesn't respond?

Gio. Resume provoking him again, or press him as I told you, thereby making him either throw a blow or retire back.

But I want to tell you the counters to the aforesaid provocations in coda lunga alta, which are: when your enemy passes forward with his right foot and does a falso and mandritto against your sword, moving your right foot along the diagonal you'll go into cinghiale porta di ferro with your sword and your cape will see to the defense of your head.

But when he feints the thrust in order to give you the mandritto to the leg, you'll raise your cape in defense against the thrust. But in his turning of the mandritto, you'll pass forward with your right foot, and in that tempo your cape will accompany your sword, and with the false edge thereof you'll dismiss the said blow, immediately cutting him with a riverso to the thigh. But in the thrusting of the punta riversa, you'll hit that with your cape, and in the turning of the riverso to the leg, you'll immediately cast your left foot behind your right one and turn a riverso squalimbro to his sword arm in that tempo. And these are their counters.

Now, continuing on with the provocations in porta di ferro stretta, when you find yourself with the swords in the said guard, and the capes in coda lunga alta, you can turn a dritto tramazzone on his sword, then immediately pass forward with your left foot and thrust a punta riversa to his face, followed by a riverso to his leg; or, after you've thrown the said thrust, you can advance with your right foot, and with a half turn of your fist thrust an imbrogata to his flank. You can also thrust the punta riversa with your right foot forward, and speedily make a **[56recto]** feint of giving him a mandritto tondo to the head, nonetheless turning a riverso to his leg, raising your cape in that tempo in defense of your head; or, once you've thrown the said thrust, you'll pass forward with your left foot, throwing your cape onto his right arm, and in that instant you'll turn a riverso squalimbro to his head with which you'll fix yourself in coda lunga alta, with your cape in porta di ferro alta.

In addition, you can make a pretense of moving yourself a pace, and all in one tempo go with the forte of your sword, accompanied by your cape, onto your enemy's sword, and thrust your point into his chest. And these are the ways to provoke your enemy and wound him as well, both being in porta di ferro stretta.

The counters are: as your enemy turns the tramazzone, you won't move, but as he throws the thrust, you'll hit that with your false edge, and then as he turns the riverso, you'll draw your right foot behind your left one, giving the enemy a riverso to the arm in that tempo. But if after he throws the aforesaid thrust he turns his fist in order to wound you with the imbrogata, you'll parry that with the true edge of your sword, immediately sticking the point into his chest. And if he thrusts the point with his right foot forward, you'll go into guardia d'entrare with your sword, thrusting your point into his face all in one tempo. And if perchance he turns the mandritto, you'll immediately raise your sword into guardia di faccia. But in his turning of the riverso to your leg, you'll protect yourself from that with a riverso ridoppio, and with a turn of your hand upwards you'll slice him with a mandritto to the thigh. Then, when he steps with his left foot after having thrown the thrust in order to enfold your right arm with his cape, against his extension of the thrust you'll hit it with your sword, but as he steps in order to enfold you, you'll immediately draw back your right foot, turning **[56verso]** a mandritto tramazzone in that

tempo which will fall into cinghiale porta di ferro, and you'll put your cape in the defense of your head. And these are their counters.

Now listen to the provocations in cinghiale porta di ferro. When both have their swords fixed in that guard and their capes in guardia di testa, you can pass forward with your right foot and thrust a punta riversa to the face followed by a riverso to the leg; or once you've thrown the said thrust you can turn a mandritto tondo to his head; or, in the throwing of the aforesaid thrust, as he raises his sword to defend himself, you can immediately step toward his right side with your left foot and put your cape under his right hand, but all in one tempo you'll turn a mandritto to his legs, making your right foot follow behind your left one.

In addition to this, you can throw two punte riverse, one to the face with your right foot forward, passing with your left one promptly toward his right side, hanging your cape on his sword arm, and in that tempo you'll draw back your fist somewhat and thrust the other one into his chest. And these are the provocations and attacks from cinghiale porta di ferro.

Now I'll continue by telling you their counters, which will be: as the enemy throws the thrust with his right foot forward, you'll parry that with your true edge, but in his turning of a riverso to your thigh, you'll draw your left foot behind your right one, and in the same tempo you'll give him a mandritto to his sword arm. But if he throws the thrust in order to give you a mandritto to the head you'll hit that with your false edge, but in the turning of the mandritto you'll immediately pass forward with your right foot and defend yourself from that with your cape, giving him a mandritto to the leg in that instant. And if he extends the said thrust with his right foot forward, while **[57recto]** stepping with your right foot you'll parry that with the false edge of your sword, but in the step that he takes with his other foot in order to hit you in your right arm with his cape, you'll immediately draw back your right foot behind your left one, turning a riverso to his head all in one tempo.

But if he throws the two punte riverse, the one while stepping forward with the right foot and the other with the left one, in his first thrust you'll step forward with your right foot and beat it away with the false edge of your sword. But in the thrusting of the second one, you'll advance forward with your left foot and hit that with your cape, and in the same tempo you'll turn an overhand riverso to his head. And these are their counters.

Now, coming to the provocations in guardia d'alicorno with the right foot forward, when you find yourselves with your swords in the said guard and your capes in cinghiale porta di ferro alta, you can thrust an imbroccata to his cape arm, or turn a mandritto to the same arm with which you'll fix yourself in porta di ferro with your cape in guardia di testa. You can also make a feint of extending a thrust, nonetheless turning a riverso to his cape hand, with which you'll fix yourself in coda lunga stretta with your cape in cinghiale porta di ferro.

The counters are: as he thrusts the imbroccata, draw your right foot back a pace, giving a mandritto squalimbro to the enemy's hand. But if he turns the mandritto, pass forward with your left foot and defend yourself with the cape, throwing a mandritto to his leg in that tempo. And if he feints the thrust of the imbroccata, you won't move in response to the feint, but as he turns the riverso, draw your right foot near your left one, leaning your body back somewhat, and letting the blow go in vain; then immediately thrust an imbroccata **[57verso]** to his chest. And these are the counters.

Now note the provocations in the last guard, which is that of guardia d'alicorno with the left foot forward. Both of you being fixed in it with your capes in porta di ferro alta, in order to be the provocateur you can feint an imbroccata to the face from outside his cape, passing toward his left side with your right foot, and immediately turn a mandritto to his leg with which you'll fix yourself in porta di ferro with your cape in defense of your head.

The counter is: as he steps, feinting the imbroccata to give you the mandritto to the leg, you'll promptly pass toward his left side with your right foot, turning a mandritto to his sword arm, which will fix you in porta di ferro larga, making your cape defend your head.

And here I'll make an end, owing to the lateness of the hour, and because it seems to me that we've dealt with this quite amply.

Lep. I rest quite satisfied by you in every regard, and am infinitely grateful to you. There remains only, if you please, for us to meet here again tomorrow in order to discuss the joust, as you had promised me—so that my desire regarding this, as of the rest, will come to be fulfilled.

Gio. We'll do precisely this, and I will do everything in my power in order to please you.

The end of the First Book.

[58recto] THE SECOND BOOK, AND THE SIXTH DAY OF DIALOGUES

By Messer Giovanni dall'Agocchie, Bolognese:
Wherein is discussed the art of the joust.

INTERLOCUTORS:

M. Giovanni dall'Agocchie & M. Lepido Ranieri.

I never enter into this garden, M. Lepido, without rejoicing, so much does this beautiful greenery delight me. Whence you've judiciously this place for our discussions, because you couldn't have chosen a more beautiful nor more comfortable one, nor one wherein I would more willingly speak than this.

Lep. You see that I was thinking of both your enjoyment and of the delight and utility that I derive from your discussion, having chosen a place conducive to the one and the

other. Accordingly, let's sit in our places, and please begin discussing tilting with the lance, so that I may attend you with the hope of being satisfied by you in this matter, as you've made me with respect to arms.

Gio. I'll do everything in my power to recall to my memory all the observations and advice that must be employed in the art of the joust, so that you may be as satisfied by me as I can make you. So question me at your pleasure, and interrupt me whenever you wish, so that I can always reply to you with a glad spirit.

Lep. Since you permit me to ask you, I'd like you to explain to me the reason why the ring wasn't placed reasonably.

[58verso] Gio. Didn't you see how low it was? And positioned almost in the middle of the course?

Lep. I saw it, although I thought that it was fine like that, since I've seen it positioned that way in many other places.

Gio. I believe you, but those who positioned it like that didn't have knowledge of jousting, because if they had, then they would have placed it reasonably.

Lep. How should it be placed in order to be reasonable?

{How the ring must be placed when jousting.}

Gio. Outside the course, at least three feet of measure toward the left side of the one who is tilting, because just as the adversary always approaches on a rider's left side when jousting in the encounter, so should the ring be placed on the same side as well, if one wants it to be placed reasonably. Regarding the height, it should be six feet of measure above the ground, as it's a more reasonable and beautiful thing to accustom oneself to tilt with the lance high than low, because coming to tilt, either on the course or the open field, one will be able to strike the head more surely and with greater ease, this being the most notable blow that one may face.

Lep. I understand, but tell me the reason why tilting at the ring like so was invented.

Gio. It was invented in order to make it entertaining, and encourage youths who are still learning to tilt with the lance, as this is the easiest way that's employed.

Lep. Yet it seems difficult to me to get it in that ring.

Gio. It's true that it's difficult, but it doesn't consist so much of getting it in the ring as much as it does in seeing a rider carry his lance well, and tilting it reasonably.

Lep. What does tilting with the lance reasonably consist of?

{What tilting with the lance reasonably consists of.}

Gio. Of six chief headings. The first is in understanding how to be on horseback well. The second is in holding and carrying the lance on the thigh. The third is in knowing how to lift it from the thigh. The fourth is in placing it on the lance-rest. The fifth is in knowing how [59recto] to couch it. The sixth and last is in knowing how to recover it.

Lep. For my satisfaction, I'd like you to explain these six headings to me better, so that I can achieve understanding of this art as well with great ease.

Gio. I'll be glad to explain them to you. Beginning with the first one, I'll say that since the art of riding belongs to riding masters, I won't exert myself upon it at much length. I'll only give you three necessary recommendations, of which the first is that being on horseback, a rider shouldn't be seated much, because in addition to the discomfort that one receives thereby in tilting with the lance, it makes an ugly sight.

Lep. Perhaps you want him to stand up straight in the stirrups?

Gio. I didn't say that, but I want to imply that one can arrange himself in sitting in the saddle in such a manner that he comes to be somewhat straighter than usual, so that doing so, he'll be more beautiful on horseback, and also more comfortable and safer in tilting with the lance, and especially when tilting at the encounter.

The second recommendation is, that in beginning on the course, he shouldn't apply the spurs to the horse furiously, but send him slowly, so that he comes to the course more willingly. And it's also done because by moving the horse with great impetus one can easily lose his lance, as has been seen many times.

The third and last being that on the course, not to press him much with the left spur, because that way the horses won't have a reason to flee the course, if they're found to be among those that flee it too eagerly, either for fear of the blow, or through hearing the impact of the other horse as it comes to encounter them; and for this reason putting belled collars on them was devised, so that they wouldn't hear the other's impact.

Lep. Now that I've heard these recommendations, continue to discuss the other headings.

Gio. In the second heading there are three ways for you to hold and [59verso] carry the lance on the thigh, that is, between the thigh and the saddle. The first one is to hold it inclined somewhat outward toward his right side. The second is to make it hang somewhat toward the left side. The third and last is holding the lance so that it hangs neither there nor there, but so that it remains fixed in the middle.

Lep. For what reason do you want it that way, so that it's held between the thigh and the saddle?

Gio. Because when the jousting is armored, the harness would get in the way so that the butt of the lance couldn't be fixed upon it except with difficulty, and given this, it's held in the aforementioned fashion out of necessity.

Lep. That's a good reason. But tell me, among these three ways of holding and carrying the lance on the thigh, which is the loveliest?

Gio. To hold and carry it fixed in the middle, because in addition to avoiding extremes, one also makes a lovely sight, keeping, however, the point of the lance neither too high nor too low, but reasonably; and similarly one needs to keep the right elbow in such a manner that it doesn't point either too far up nor down; but it has to have a lovely grace.

Lep. But if the lance has to hang to one of the two sides, which one would be better for it to decline toward?

Gio. Toward the left side, but not much, because some have been seen who, in order to display their bravery, carried it so slanted that they made those who saw them laugh; but letting it hang it toward the right side is something I don't praise in any way; on the contrary, I condemn it utterly, because beyond being very ugly to behold, many mistakes can occur to you that arise when lifting it from the thigh and placing it in the lance-rest; but in the other two ways this danger isn't present.

Lep. Why do many fall into this error?

Gio. Because they don't have a rational understanding of jousting. But to continue with the discussion of the third heading, there are also three ways in it of lifting the lance from the thigh. One [60recto] is, when lifting it from it while on the course, to immediately put it in the lance-rest. The next is, while you are placing yourself on the course, to lift it, and hold it outside the thigh with the wrist, with the arm extended downward. The third and last is, as one is sent to the course, to lift it upward from the thigh somewhat, holding it again with the wrist, but the arm must be a bit bent, making the point of the lance aim toward the adversary; and above all, one must be advised not to lean the lance upon oneself, because it looks too ugly; and these are the ways that are currently in use.

Lep. Which of these ways do you hold to be the best?

Gio. All three are good, however I hold the last one to be the best and surest, because when the jousting holds his arm somewhat bent he supports the lance more easily, beyond which, there's more surety when placing it in the lance-rest, owing to the hand being closer to it; and moreover holding it and carrying it by the wrist is useful in war, given that all things are more lovely and praiseworthy the nearer they come to the semblance of truth.

Lep. So it is, but tell me, why is carrying the lance in the pouch *<borsetta>* almost never done anymore?

Gio. Because the lances that are made these days are lighter and more maneuverable, and the saddlebows on the front of the saddles are smaller; and it's also not done in order to avoid two errors which could arise from tilting if the lances were held in the pouch: of

which the first is, that when tilting, the lance would be shaking; and the other is that it could break on the course, as has been seen many times among those who had wanted to tilt with light lances, holding them in the pouch.

Lep. Then why was carrying the lance in the pouch invented?

{Why the lance was carried in the pouch.}

Gio. Because the lances that were in use then were so large and heavy that only awkwardly could they be carried by the wrist, and also the saddlebows on the front of the saddles [60verso] that were in use were so wide that they impeded the gripping of it, and the carrying of it reasonably upon the thigh. And considering this, the pouch was invented.

Lep. How did it come to pass that such heavy lances are no longer used?

Gio. Because riders are no longer interested in knocking each other from horseback, as they were then, given that this truly is a thing more likely to displease than to please, but today they care only to carry the lance well and to break it judiciously; because in truth, when doing it for entertainment, extremes should always be avoided.

Lep. I understand that it's as you say. Therefore, continue with the fourth heading.

{In how many ways the lance can be placed in the lance-rest.}

Gio. Note then, that there are also three ways to place the lance in the lance-rest. The first one is, at the beginning of the course. The second one is when the horse has been dispatched. The third is when one draws near to his adversary.

Lep. Which of these three ways do you hold to be the best and safest?

Gio. The second one, that is, when he's sent down the course. The reason is that if you want to place the lance in the lance-rest at the beginning of the course, it might go shaking up and down, which makes it very ugly to watch; and this arises sometimes not due to the rider, but due to the horse, who when setting off disturbs him in such a fashion that he can't keep his lance steady. And then, wishing to steady it when he nears his adversary, one who hasn't had a great deal of practice can easily give him the lance to the head, or pass him without hitting, or in lowering it too quickly could hit his lance into the barrier, as has been experienced many times. But by placing it in the lance-rest once the course is under way, these dangers are avoided, and so as well carrying the lance in the lance-rest somewhat fixed and with good judgment makes a very lovely sight. And for these reasons I hold that carrying the lance in the lance-rest when the course is under way is better and safer. But most of all, [61recto] when arresting the lance, it's necessary to put the hand forward, turning the hand inward in that tempo in such a fashion that the last joints of the fingers face upwards, so that by doing so the lance comes to be placed in the lance-rest more safely and with greater ease.

Lep. Do you wish, then, that the grapper should be immediately drawn near to the lance-rest?

Gio. Not this, because one could upset the lance. Nonetheless, if the rider wanted to draw the grapper near the lance-rest for his satisfaction, it would be far better and safer for him to draw it there bit by bit while he was on the course; but take note of the fifth heading.

Lep. Wait, please, because first I'd like you to clear up a doubt for me, which is that many people say that one shouldn't hold the fist tight when the lance is in the lance-rest; they say that keeping the hand open instead is much better.

Gio. Rather, it is entirely the opposite, because when one delivers the blow, the grapper hits into the lance-rest; and if the hand were open, the impact would make it slide over, where it might hit into the bulk of the lance, which is over the grip. And in consideration of this many have gauntleted their hands. But holding it somewhat tight, this danger doesn't exist. And moreover, when the lances strike together, holding it in the said fashion easily causes the adversary's (if he's holding his hand open) not to hit, but the other one can hit more surely. And these are the reasons why it's much better and surer to hold the hand as I've said above.

Lep. I understand. Continue on to discuss the fifth heading.

{In how many ways the lance is couched.}

Gio. In the fifth heading there are three ways to couch the lance. One is to lower it immediately upon placing it in the lance-rest. The next is to keep it high at the beginning of the course, and to lower it a little when one begins to draw near to the enemy. The third and last one is to lower it all in one tempo [61verso] when one wishes to hit.

Lep. Which of these three ways is the surest?

Gio. Holding it high, and then lowering it a bit as I've said, because if a jousting wishes to couch his lance at the very beginning of the course, when he wishes to deliver the blow he is often forced either to raise his point or to hit the shoulder, and over all both of these ways are ugly to watch. As for wanting to lower it and immediately strike, beyond being difficult, this is not very sure. But by putting the lance high, and with advantage, and then lowering it a bit when one begins to near the enemy, that is, raising the elbow a bit, one can deliver the blow easily, and moreover this makes a very lovely sight.

Lep. What do you mean by this "advantage"?

Gio. I mean that in placing the lance in the lance-rest, it should be placed firmly and in such a manner that its point goes toward the left side, so much so that the outside of the adversary's lance can be uncovered, always keeping the eyes fixed at the target of the eyeslit of the helm, so that by doing so it is almost impossible to pass the course without striking. And this is the surest method that can be employed.

Lep. I like this very much, so continue with the other parts.

{In what fashion the lance is recovered.}

Gio. Now, coming to discuss the sixth, and final heading, I tell you that there are two ways to recover the lance. The first is to return it onto the thigh once past the enemy. The second is to cast the butt of the lance behind the right thigh, making its point face backward, and then once the horse has stopped, to return it onto the thigh.

Lep. Which of these two ways is the better one?

Gio. The latter is better, because wanting to put the lance back on the thigh immediately is somewhat difficult when in armor, because the harness (as I've said) very often impedes one. But putting it behind the thigh, since it isn't any impediment to you, is much surer.

Lep. Why is it that many, [62recto] as soon as they've passed the adversary, cast their lance to the ground or place it upon their shoulder?

Gio. Because they don't know how to recover the lance. If they did know the true way to do so, they wouldn't place it upon their shoulder, since it truly is a very ugly thing to behold, nor should any such fashion be employed.

And with this I'll put an end to these headings, of which I've told you all the ways that must be observed when wishing to tilt the lance reasonably.

Lep. I rest very satisfied by you thus far, nonetheless, I would also hold it very dear if you would tell me if there is anything else to know pertinent to jousting.

Gio. There remains to understand the rule that must be held in acquiring experience, because what was contained in the five headings was the theory of jousting, which indicates the true way that has to be observed when wishing to tilt with the lance reasonably. Experience, then, is that which is acquired by a great deal of practice.

There remains, then, for you to understand how the lance-rest must be, and where it should be placed; and also how all the body armor goes; and similarly how long the lance should be together with all of its armaments; and finally there remains for you to understand the measure with which the barrier is made, and with what rule the counterlist is placed, which are all things pertinent and very necessary to the joust.

Lep. I'd like for you to explain this to me as well, so that I can wholly fulfill my wishes.

Gio. Because I take great care to satisfy your noble desire, and in order to complete our discussion, I'll tell you everything.

{In what fashion the jousting must practice.}

And commencing, I say that when a jousting wishes to practice in order to acquire experience, he must first armor himself only with a cuirass, and then tilt either on foot or

horse, according to which he prefers, in order to accustom himself to carrying the lance by the wrist, and also placing it surely upon the lance-rest without ever looking.

[62verso] Lep. Why don't you want him to look at the lance-rest?

Gio. Because in any case he wouldn't be able to avail himself of it when at the task, given that the lance-rest can't be seen when one has the buffe and helm on one's head; and even if there weren't this reason, it isn't good in any fashion, but is rather a hideous defect in those who practice it.

Lep. Then why did those who practice it come up with it?

Gio. There are many who do so, and especially among those who make their livings on horseback. And this occurs because they don't have an understanding of tilting with the lance, and they care less to learn it, like those who convince themselves so much that it seems to them that they understand a great deal. But if they considered well, and with clear judgment, how important it is to understand things with reason, they would take an example from artisans, who, when they want to begin to learn their arts, seek first to understand how they have to apply their instruments to their requirements. Then how much more should these, who make a trade of arms, seek with every study to understand how to tilt with the lance reasonably, given that this is their principal profession? But if I wanted to go on discussing this, it would take too long. Indeed, it would be necessary to spend an entire day on this subject.

Lep. I believe you easily, because I too have known many who made a great profession of having the understanding of arms both afoot and on horseback, and then when they were put to the test, they knew very little of it. But I want to leave these to their opinions, and continue our discussion, because I'm sure that I will be very happy to understand why it is that you want a rider at the beginning of learning to tilt with the lance to do so on foot.

Gio. This is because he'll be able to learn how to carry the lance by the wrist more freely, and to accustom himself to doing so, **[63recto]** and placing it in the lance-rest, and couching it with reason, without the horse impeding him, considering that once he's had some practice in this exercise, he can then mount his horse with greater safety and tilt at a glove, or at another target, as he likes best, and once he's had good practice in this, he can then begin to break lances.

Lep. What would you like him to break these lances on?

Gio. On a quintain, as is used, or he can use another method, much lovelier, and of greater utility in order to protect himself excellently, which is this: he can make himself a wooden man and armor it with a cuirass and a helmet on its head, and then put it on a horse, also made of wood, like those that are employed for vaulting; which horse then has to be put on a carriage made with four wheels beneath it, one foot above ground, although the two that are in front will be a bit lower than the other two, accommodating the said

horse together with the wooden man, in such a fashion that it can't fall, this being made with a double cord about six *braccia* in length attached to the front of the carriage. Then it will be drawn by someone running as fast as he can along the length of the course, which will have to be done in such a fashion that the wheels can turn easily, and thus by jousting at the said man, the rider will come to make himself sure, and acquire excellent practice, given that this is a method almost like tilting at the encounter.

Lep. Could lances be broken on this armored man without the use of a lance-rest?

Gio. They could, but as for me, I don't praise it at all, because if a rider wants to break one without a lance-rest, it's likely that he will tighten up on the lance when he wants to strike, and in that action the lance would become disturbed, and make an ugly sight.

Lep. You've always satisfied me in every matter, and in this [63verso] above all. But tell me, please, do you want there to be a barrier on the course?

Gio. To whomever can afford it, it would be better, and even if it weren't of boards it wouldn't matter much, because they can be made in a variety of ways that don't cost too much, all of which will serve for this purpose. And one can also make a lance in two pieces, which will be good for practicing, because in truth when a jouster wants to assure himself well and acquire excellent experience, before he tilts at the encounter he needs to break a lot of lances. Otherwise it could happen to him as occurs to many, who through excessive self-confidence have wanted to tilt at the encounter without practicing, and have then done themselves little honor.

Lep. There are a lot of such people, but to return to our discussion, I'd like you to tell me how these lances in two pieces are made.

{Lance in two pieces.}

Gio. One constructs the lance's trunk, that is, the part from the middle downward, four feet of measure in length (which measure of a foot, and of an inch, will be shown by me in a diagram at the end of this discussion of ours), then on the end of said trunk is affixed a pipe made of good plate, welded well, at least nine inches long, which needs to be projected forward of the trunk by more than half, and the other part will be fixed on the tip of the said trunk. Then some pieces can be made that furnish the length of the lance, and are arranged so that they are attached inside the pipe, so that when the lance is entirely together, it really seems to be whole. And by painting the pipe the color of the wood, it almost won't be recognized as a lance in two pieces; and this trunk will serve for breaking a lot of them, which is the most useful way, and of as little cost as can be had.

Lep. These pieces, how [64recto] long should they be?

Gio. Six feet, because the lance is ordinarily ten feet long. But you need to be aware that from the butt to the grip shouldn't be more than one and a quarter feet, that is, fifteen inches, because if it were longer it would prove a great inconvenience both in holding the lance and in lifting it from the thigh.

Lep. What size should the butt of the lance be?

Gio. It has to avoid extremes, nonetheless if its circumference near the grip were six and a half inches, it would seem good to me, and very comfortable. But since we've come to discussing the lance, I want to tell you how its armaments need to be, which are of no small importance.

{Armaments of the lance.}

And beginning with the grapper, it should be placed about an inch from the grip; and that part of it that has to hit into the lance-rest shouldn't be wider than two fifths of an inch, because if it were wider, when couching the lance it could easily touch the cuirass, whereby it would impede the blow. But being narrow, this danger wouldn't occur.

Now, coming to the coronel that goes on the head of the lance, it should be made of excellent steel, with six teeth on the tip which need to open well outwards, because by doing so it'll break on the helm more safely; and it should be one inch long, not counting the teeth, or a bit longer, covered over in such a fashion that it can't break through during the impact, and above all it should be well tempered so that it will bite into helms, which ordinarily are always very hard. And so that you understand, good coronels made with an excellent temper have very often won the prize of the joust.

Then there is the vamplate which goes at least four inches above the grip of the lance, because if it were high **<i.e. too distal>** it would fail to armor the right shoulder and [64verso] could easily be damaged by the adversary's lance, the said vamplate being that which defends the entire right arm. And therefore it should be arranged in a manner that is steady and placed with good judgment, because if it were too low instead, its edge could touch the cuirass when wishing to deliver the blow, whereby it would impede the breaking of the lance. But if it were positioned in the way that I've said, these perils would be avoided.

Lep. What size should this vamplate be?

Gio. There should be about three inches of bell, not counting the throat, and the diameter of its mouth should be eight and a half inches, and it should be neither too heavy nor too light, but if it's two and a half pounds it would be good, and safe.

{Body armor.}

Now, coming to speak of the armaments of the body, there are three pieces to be particularly considered out of all others. One is the helm, the next is the buffe, and the third is the lance-rest.

{Helm.}

The helm shouldn't have a very wide eyeslit; in any case, it will suffice only that one be able to see the adversary, because all the rest is done through practice anyway, since one can see neither the lance-rest, nor the horse's left ear, nor the point of the lance once it's been placed in the lance-rest, as many claim, all of which are thought to be visible, but rather it's entirely the opposite, since upon placing the lance in the lance-rest the vamplate comes to occupy one's view, nor is the adversary visible until such a point as the lance begins to be lowered. For this reason I'm of the opinion that the inside half,

that is, the left side, of the helm's eyeslit should be sealed, since by doing so the jouster's life would be well protected, because the experience of many has been witnessed who have been wounded or killed in the joust by the lance's entry into the same part. And therefore, if the said part were sealed, this danger would be avoided. And especially [65recto] when one is tilting for fun or the enjoyment of others.

Lep. I like this opinion of yours a lot, and may God will that it be put into use for the benefit of jousters.

{Bufte.}

Gio. May it be as you say. But coming to discuss the bufte, it should properly be like the eyeslit of the helm, and as much as if faces outward and keeps the rider straighter, so much safer will it be. And above all else, the edge of the said bufte should be restrained in such a fashion that it doesn't face toward the right side, so that it doesn't result in making a target of the left temple. Because too many are seen who, when they tilt, immediately upon placing their lances in their lance-rests, turn their left sides toward the enemy, which, beyond making a very ugly sight, results in two errors: one is that they create a target, as I've said, and the other is that by misfortune the point of the lance may go wide toward the outside, so that if they want to deliver the blow they have to bump with the shoulder so that the lance will strike. And from this it arises that many times either they don't break, or go on the diagonal, or the two make contact, as has been seen many times through experience.

Lep. What you say is true.

{Lance-rest.}

Gio. Now as for the jousting rest, it should be three inches long at most, because if it were longer it wouldn't be reliable for putting the lance on, considering that your hand could easily go on the inside of it, or when lowering the lance your arm could bump into the lance-rest from it being too long, in consequence whereof you could only deliver the blow with great effort.

One also has to be advised that the said lance-rest should be arched upward **<i.e. so that the concavity is upward>** somewhat so that the lance goes on top of it with greater surety, and finally it's necessary to recommend that in attaching it to the cuirass, it's better to be higher than low, namely, on the right breast. But above all, arrange it in such a fashion that the forward edge of the [65verso] said lance-rest faces somewhat upward, so that the butt of the lance is placed upon it when wanting to deliver the blow, because if it were placed on the rear edge, the lance would not be as sure to break, as it could slip out of it. And these are the things relevant to the lance-rest.

Lep. I understand. Continue, and I'll pay attention to you.

{How the jousting barrier should be.}

Gio. Now, coming to discuss the barrier, it should be at least two hundred feet long, because if it were shorter, the jousters would meet each other too soon to be able to do anything good. Regarding the height, it should rise five feet above the ground for greater

safety. The counterlist should be one hundred fifty feet long and two and a half feet high, but it needs to lean toward the barrier a bit, that is the distance between the one and the other should be three and a half feet at the top, and four feet at the bottom, and this is the true measure that must be used.

Lep. Why do you want the counterlist to lean toward the barrier?

Gio. So that there is no reason for the jouster to bump his feet into the poles that support the counterlist when he spurs the horse. And here I put the end, because this is over all as much as I have to tell you about this.

Lep. Now I've understood all your advice that pertains to the art of the joust, whereby I am wholly satisfied, and will always be infinitely obliged to you.

Gio. Let these words not be used between us, M. Lepido, because you know well how much I love you. So let's go, and if there's anything else in which you know that I can be of good service to you, command me happily, and I will always be very swift to please you.

Lep. Since you give me the courage to command you (thanks to your kindness) I would also like, if it please you, for us to return here tomorrow in order to discuss some things relevant to the art [66recto] of war, which I desire very much to understand.

Gio. I'd be happy to return, and won't fail to make plain to you what I know, as usual.

Lep. I have faith that you will. But I recall that you'd promised to show me a diagram of the measures of a foot and of an inch. Therefore don't refrain from fulfilling this promise to me.

Gio. I have at once drawn from my pocket this card, whereon is the diagram, at the time to show it to you. So have a look at it. This measure is only half a foot, that is, six inches, which as you see are divided evenly, and can be doubled in order to make a whole foot. **<The diagram is reproduced along the right edge of the page of the original, labeled "This is the measure of the half foot, that is, six inches.">**

Lep. Now I've seen it, and liked it. So thank you for it, as for all your other courtesies. Let's go.

THE END OF THE SECOND BOOK.