

GIOIELLO

DI SAPIENZA,

NEL QUALE SI CONTENGONO

Le seguenti Virtù,

Primo, Effercitij d'Arme in diuersi modi.

Secondo, Inuentioni artificiose, nobili, e varie.

Con le figure poste a' suoi luoghi per maggior dicchiaraone.

Terzo, Auuertimenti per difenderfi da molti animali nociui.

Quarto, Secreti medicinali vtili, e necessarij à corpi humani.

Nouamente dato in luce da me Antonio Quintino.



Stampata in Barcellona, in Milano, & in Nouara,
Appresso Gieronimo Sefali. 1614.

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The following is a translation of the title page and part one ("the Exercise of Arms in diverse ways") of Gioiello di Sapienza. The work itself is a hodge-podge of material, with the remaining sections having no relation to fencing. It will be obvious to the reader that this is not the work of a fencing master, but rather a short collection of advice and tricks. To quote Jacopo Gelli in L'Arte dell'Armi in Italia, "Il merito schermistico del *Gioiello di sapienza* è meno che nullo..." ("The value of Jewel of Knowledge with respect to fencing is less than nothing..."). From a practical standpoint, depending on how one defines "fencing", this is arguably quite true. Quintino seems to have been writing more from the standpoint of how to survive a fight by whatever means necessary, lacking extensive training. That said, the following is of at least academic interest as representing a perspective distinct from that of the maestro. And if nothing else, it's pretty entertaining.

JEWEL OF KNOWLEDGE, IN WHICH ARE CONTAINED THE FOLLOWING VIRTUES,

First, the Exercise of Arms in diverse ways.

Second, clever, noble, and varied Inventions.

With figures provided in their places for better clarification.

Third, Advisements for defending oneself from many dangerous animals.

Fourth, medicinal Secrets, useful and necessary to the human body.

Newly published by me, Antonio Quintino.

Stamped in Barcelona, in Milan, and in Novara,

Printed by Gieronimo Sefalli. 1614.

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Very useful and necessary discourse for enabling one to defend oneself from the enemy in case it should come to that assault in several ways, according to the circumstances that can occur.

Trick with the sword and dagger. First advisement.



If by chance you find yourself armed with the sword and dagger, and you came against your enemy, put your hands to the one and the other, but stick the sword that you have drawn under your left arm, as you see in the present figure, and next the dagger in your right hand, and throw it forcefully toward the face of your enemy, which being done, take with speed the sword previously resting under your left arm, and with that molest your enemy, because against the attack of the dagger, it is not to be at all doubted, he will procure himself some defense in that tempo, either with retreating, or raising his arm, or making some other sign to ward the said blow, in which tempo you, delivering mandritti and riversi, will safely strike him. However it would be good to accustom yourself to throwing the dagger well with the point, in order to enable it to hit; but even if you do not know how to do thus well, do not

for this reason refrain from doing the aforesaid blow, because wherever the dagger goes, you place the adversary in such disorder, that you, being quick to strike with your sword, will remain the victor.

About going armed at night.

Many times it befits a man for some business of his to go out at night, and it pleases him to go armed for the safety of his person; accordingly it will not be an unseemly thing to give some advisements about this. Therefore to whom would go armed at night, it behooves him to be careful, and chiefly to have as much as possible his eyes on everything, and to walk quietly, without any racket, always with an eye towards whomever comes across him, noting also in what manner they approach, and to carry his sword crossing his body, gripped in the right hand, holding the left under the hilt, so that in need he can instantly place it in hand. Take care as well to grip your cape well, and in such a way as to not tangle it around your feet; being careful as well in stepping forward and back not to fall, because it being nighttime, you cannot see where to place your feet safely.

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Way of holding, finding yourself unarmed on the ground.



If you find yourself fallen to the ground without any weapons to defend yourself from your armed enemy, and he comes to strike you, do not lose heart, but in a single tempo raise both your feet, and cramp them to your body, or to say it better, bringing your knees near to your chest, try to grasp both of his arms, pulling him toward you forcefully, and extending your feet toward him, do not doubt, that through his being bowed down, and through the said violence, he will fall on you bent at an angle, from which you will be able to overcome him, as you see by the present figure; and remember that it has been seen by many experienced grounded men, governing themselves with such judgment, having their enemy above them, that they have defeated them, because lifted up in such disorder, that things are turned to the opposite, from which through not knowing how to approach or retire many wound up lost, and others through knowing how to avail themselves of tempo and judgment wound up victors, and regarding as much as is said, consider the present figure.

Regarding one who was assaulted by an enemy, finding himself unarmed.



Remember if your enemy ever comes to assault you, finding yourself unarmed, not to lose a bit of the courage necessary to defend yourself; and if indeed you seem to yourself to be at a disadvantage, consider that if it gives rise to him striking you it would be very worse; and therefore get every means of defending yourself, and do not disparage this advice, that did well for an infinity of persons; I say, then, that coming toward your adversary, be quick, when he raises his right arm in order to strike you, to thrust yourself under him, and with your left arm seize his right at the elbow, or wherever it is found, and with your right hand grasp him by the collar at the throat, and thrusting your left foot behind his right, push forcefully, so that he goes to the ground; but if you have a cape, note this other advice, when you have the enemy opposite you; and take the mantle by the hood, and making it pass over your head, throw it on the head of your enemy; which if you see it in your face, be quick to embrace it and throw it to the ground, raising your weapons. Remember also, that finding yourself close, if you see that your adversary has a mantle over both his shoulders, and you being able to seize both ends of it very near the neck, that it is possible, once you have this, that the said mantle will be to him as a halter about his neck, by which pulling him forcefully it will necessarily come out to his displeasure, especially if pulling with your left hand you hit the enemy's face with your right. I have known one who by this means freed himself from a knave in the street that wanted to assassinate him. Note as well this advice: seeing your enemy come towards you, have in hand a bit of vitriol and saltpeter, each reduced to a powder, and that there be as much of one as of the other, and at the same time throw it dexterously into his eyes, which you will give to him to deal with for a while, and neither will he be protector of his person owing to the great irritation of his eyes, nor will he be able to offend you, and thus you will emerge the victor. Regarding as much as is said above, consider the last picture.

Way of knowing well how to grip the cape, and the way of availing yourself thereof.



It being seen up until now through long experience how much benefit the cape or mantle has carried, it does not seem to me be outside the proposition to spend some words about that, and first to know how to grip it; therefore, coming across your enemy, let all of the mantle fall over your left shoulder, and then jumping back, drop it over your left arm, the elbow raised somewhat, and immediately make an embrace, and then with weapons in hand encounter the enemy as you see in this figure. But if you have a mind, as is shown in the said figure, to throw the cape, note that this can be done in two ways, namely with the hand, or with the sword; therefore, wanting to throw it with the sword, it will behoove you to be careful not to have it wrapped too much around your arm, I say not more than twice, and as well not to hold it with the hand close to the point, and thus you will proceed without any impediment. But if you should want to throw it with the hand that has the cape, join it with the increase of a pace, but take heed not to throw it unless you have first encountered the enemy's sword, parrying thrust or cut, and having done so, you will immediately hurl the cape, increasing a pace, so that it will turn out excellently for you, especially if the cape is not still gripped, but at that time have raised up off the sword, because as much wider as it goes, so much more will you envelop him; as by chance happened to a Scotsman by the Count of Mantua, who, at night, being yet unarmed, saved himself in a similar manner.

Finding yourself somehow on the ground with weapons.



When through your disgrace, or it being nighttime, or through other accidents, you have fallen to the ground, having weapons, remember that, not knowing whether there will be time for you to get to your feet, at least see that you do not occupy yourself in things that are wastes of time, but with your sword, although grounded, throw blows vigorously across the legs of the enemy; and to you I give this advice, which, as writes Nicolo Bresciano, was useful to a left-handed Frenchman, who, combating another Frenchman in Palma, the fortress of Venetian Signori, killed his enemy while resting on the ground; therefore bear in mind that it is not such an easy thing as some hold it to be, to strike one armed who is on the ground, as this proposition has been seen in the world through strange examples and marvelous cases; see the figure posted above.

Regarding a perfect assault.

It is impossible for the art of fencing to be learned, not conducting your practice without the presence of the master; but because some still desire to know something about this, thus in general, leaving aside the discourse regarding the art of the straight line, of the slope paces, and of the guards, I will say only this in general, that happening to combat with an experienced person, you will arrange yourself with your left foot forward, and if possible allow him to throw the first blow, and if this cannot be done, and you pass with your sword into coda lunga, and finding yourself with sword and dagger, remember to work your dagger for your defense and your sword for assailing, fixing yourself now in one and now in another guard, and in each of them, feinting a thrust, to throw a thrust, and other times, feinting a cut, and throwing a cut; but take care that the blow be different from the feint, that if you feint the thrust high, you throw it low, and if you feint to the inside, you strike to the outside, and feinting the cut high to strike with one low, and feinting a mandritto to strike with a riverso; and this suffices as a nod to all the art of fencing, on which man must not base himself overmuch, but arm himself well with heart and reason, because your nature being of those two parts, it will make up for prowess; and that it is true that many masters of fence have been killed by their own scholars, as happened in Rome to Pietro Modenese around the year 1582, who died at the hands of a neighbor of his, most ignorant of such professions, and I say that both were armed with swords, because that one was moved by a displeasure received toward his honor.

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Trick in drawing the sword.



It is not to be at all doubted, that wishing to defend yourself from your enemy, having your sword at your side, it would behoove you for your first motion and action to put your hand to it, withdrawing it; and if in that tempo in which it is drawn a good trick could be done, it would be nothing if not good; therefore if possible take advantage of the tempo of the assault, and remove your sword from its hangers, and hold it to such end that as you see your enemy approaching you, easily draw it out not entirely, but only as far as the middle of the blade, and then removing your left hand from the sheath, with your right send that toward your enemy, I say in the way as if you wanted to give him the sheath across his face, because in this act of drawing the sword you will lose the sheath, and will find yourself with the bare sword in hand, and seeing your enemy in travail through the coming of your sheath (because doubtlessly he will want to protect himself or duck from this blow), press him, so that you will strike him safely; but do not disdain to privately practice throwing the sheath well with the sword, so that upon the coming of the occasion, you can succeed much better in this act, as is depicted in the present figure.

Dexterity in taking the sword from the hand of the enemy.

If finding yourself perchance armed only with a gauntlet, or glove of mail on your right hand, without any offensive weapon, while seeing your enemy opposite you, menacing, see that it is possible to seize his sword with your armored hand, but nearer to the middle, and gripping it firmly apply force as if you wanted to throw it behind your back; because if you do this with tempo and dexterity it will fly out of his hand; therefore you can practice this application of force privately in your room to instruct yourself.

Against a halberd, not having weapons, taking it out of his hand.



An occasion arising in which you see an enemy coming toward you with a halberd in hand, or other pole arm, be quick to go opposite him in a straight line, and when you see that you are near to him, and so far distant as the length of the reach of the halberd, take a diagonal leap, because the enemy in seeing you as near as the above said space will throw a blow with the halberd, which blow being cast, throw yourself upon him, seizing the haft, taking it out of his hands, as is shown in the present figure. Another advice against the halberd: having a cape or mantle, take it in a bundle apt for hurling it, and upon coming against the halberd, throw it towards the face of the enemy, but see that you do so at such a distance that a blow of the halberd cannot reach you; this mantle toward the face of your adversary will cause him such disorder that you will have time to hurl yourself upon him and restrain him. On the coast of Genoa in San Remo one hurled a cloak upon a halberd, which lay there so enveloped, that it gave him time to approach him and seize him by the throat, taking it out of his hands; and this much sufficed regarding the halberd.

Against the arquebus there is no rule which is good, but if you have to deal with someone who knows much about taking aim, be advised to be as distant as possible; and because there is no fencing other than distancing yourself, it is necessary to take care to not flee continuously, but rather by weaving, that is snaking, here and there, so that if it is possible he will lose his aim, and the shot will be in vain; and if a man sees the flash in the pan, let him go to the ground, because still many have survived by such means.