

GRÜNDTLICHE BESCHREIBUNG DER KUNST DES FECHTENS

DESCRIPTION OF THE ART OF FENCING

By Joachim Meyer, First published in 1570

LONGSWORD WORKBOOK

CURRENT VERSION 0.7

Longsword translation and notes by Michael G. Thomas

(C) 2014-2016 Academy of Historical Fencing

Contents

INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER ONE: THE COMBATANT AND HIS DIVISIONS	5
CHAPTER TWO: THE SWORD AND ITS DIVISIONS	7
CHAPTER THREE: THE GUARDS	8
PRIMARY GUARDS	9
OCHS	9
PFLUG	10
TAG	11
OLBER/ALBER	12
SECONDARY GUARDS	13
ZORNHUT	13
LANGORT	14
WECHSEL	15
NEBENHUT	16
EISENPORT	16
SCHRANKHUT	17
HANGETORT	18
SCHLÜSSEL	19
EINHORN	20
CHAPTER FOUR: THE CUTS	21
OBERHAU/SCHIEDELHAU	21
ZORNHAU	21
KRUMPHAU	21
SCHIELHAU	22
ZWERCHAU	22
MITTELHAU	22
UNTERHAU	22
KURTZHAU	23
GLUTZHAU	24
PRELLHAU	24
BLENDTHAU	24
WINDTHAU	24
KRONHAU	24
KNIECHELHAU	24
STURTZHAU	24
WECHSELHAU	24
SCHNELLER/ZECKRUR	24
CHAPTER FIVE: THE HANDWORK	25

CHAPTER SIX: ABZUG.....	25
CHAPTER SEVEN: STEPPING.....	25
CHAPTER EIGHT: VOR, NACH, GLEICH AND INDES	25

GETTING STARTED

Introduction and information from the AHF.

PART 1: FUNDAMENTALS

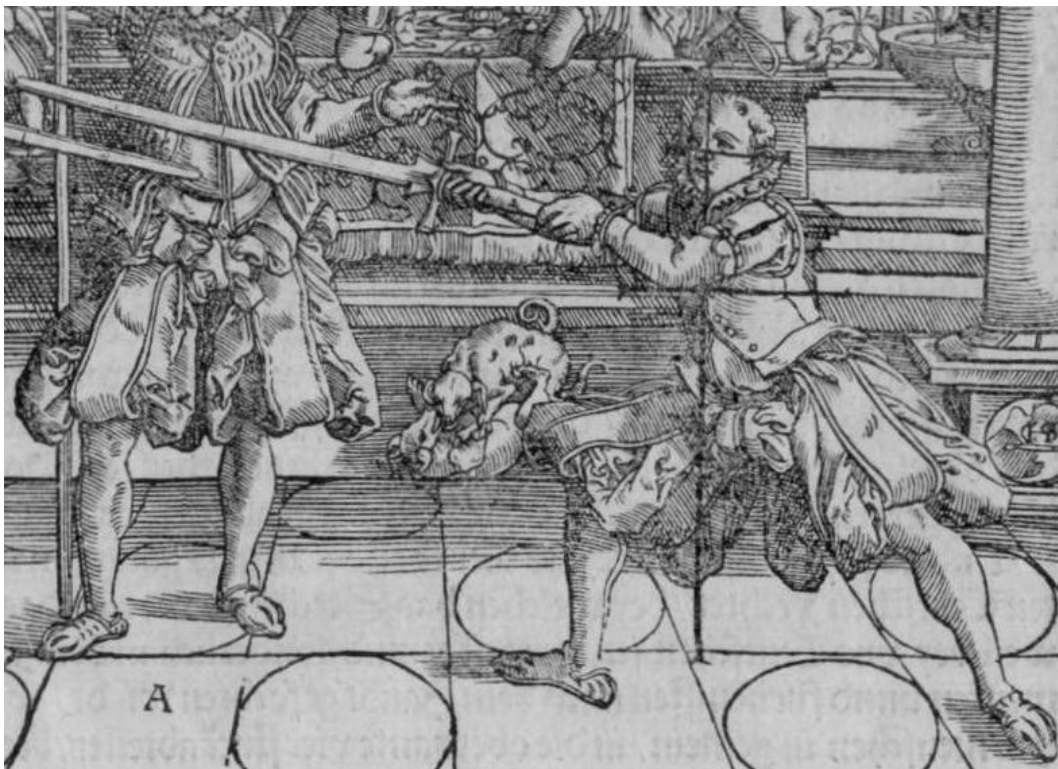
INTRODUCTION

<COMING SOON>

CHAPTER ONE: THE COMBATANT AND HIS DIVISIONS

From the division of the combatant you shall understand both the openings and the fundamental postures. These are especially important for the middle or handwork part of the combat and will appear frequently later in this book. Nonetheless I have reason to include the fundamentals at this earlier point. In combat, as in all other things it is essential to fully understand the goal before we can attempt to reach it. I will therefore offer detailed instruction of this part of the fight so that when you reach the later sections of the handwork you will already be familiar with them.

All combatants are divided up into four quarters. Two lines drawn horizontally and vertically will divide up the figure into upper, lower quarters on both the left and right. I should not have to describe this methodology in any more detail as it is easy to identify the four quarters by simply looking at your combatant from the front. If you require a better understanding of these divisions please examine the figure in image [A].



DIVISIONS [A]

These four quarters would be enough as German combatants of the past used them for both cutting and thrusting. Even so, because today us Germans make attack chiefly towards the head I will divide

the head into an additional four quarters; this is especially important for us when in the handwork and using winding. These four areas will break the head up into the upper areas around the scalp and the lower quarters around the cheek and neck. As the ear is placed directly into this division I will frequently refer to this as the left or right ear as one of the divisions of the combatants.

This division of the combatant may seem to some as very childish but it is critical for my readers to understand that all techniques and elements of the fight originate from these divisions, just as a spring must be fed from a source.

Combat is when two people fight against each other with the same weapon and either cause harm with skill or defend themselves successfully, and it is my intention to explain this methodology through individual devices and examples with all the other weapons. I should not avoid speaking of these important divisions of the person because you will learn to identify when an opponent attacks from one part to another and how to make yourself secure against their manoeuvres with the correct parry. You may also be able to strike at a particular opening if he leaves one vulnerable during his movement. His only defence will then be to position himself in a correct guard or to parry the attack.

Whenever I teach concerning guards, cuts and openings, it will be easy to understand that all of this must arise from this description of the combatant and his divisions.

CHAPTER TWO: THE SWORD AND ITS DIVISIONS

Now that I have fully described the subject of combat, specifically how you may harm another in a particular part of his body or how you will protect your own; it is necessary to explain fully how and with which particular means you will carry out this action against your opponent.

The title of my book suggests that you will only be learning the art of combat with sword, yet this does not happen in just one manner. Sometimes you will strike with the long edge, other times it will be the short edge. You will also make use of the strong or the weak of the sword. It is important for you to learn the divisions of the sword just as you have learnt the division of a man.

The sword itself is divided up into a number of component parts that include its pommel, point, quillons (also called the crossguard), hilt (also known as half or grip) and of course, the blade. As with the sword in general, the blade is divided up along two separate parts. The first of these are the weak and strong and the second part is the front and back of the blade, known as the long edge and short edge.

The strong of the blade is the part that runs from the quillons to the middle of the blade. The weak runs on from the middle until it reaches the tip of the sword. The second division of the sword concerns the edges of the blade. The long edge of the sword is part of the blade that runs from the fingers to the tip and faces your opponent. The short edge is the edge of the blade that faces back towards the thumb and index finger. In other weapons this part of the sword would be known as the back of the sword.

From this selection of divisions we may find the four proper divisions which are very important in combat. These divisions may be clearly seen in image [A]. The first of these is known as the grip and this includes both the pommel and quillon. This part of the sword is handy for *Einlauffen*, *Ringen*, *Greiffen*, *Werffen* and other close quarter work.

The second of these proper divisions is the strong and this is used for *Schneiden*, *Winden*, *Trucken* and other things that may be carried out from the strong.

The third division is the middle of the sword between the weak and the strong that may be used for a variety of works dependent upon the situation.

The fourth and final division of the sword is the weak. This part of the sword is used for *Wechseln*, *Schnellen*, *Schlaudern* and other techniques that are conducted at a distance from your opponent. There will be plenty of examples later in this book.

CHAPTER THREE: THE GUARDS

There are three main elements in all combat that you must consider. The first of these is the combatant; the second element is its means, which of course in this case is the sword. I have already described these two elements in sufficient detail but logic dictates I must now describe the third. This element is from where all combat is executed and can be divided up into three chief components as I have already described, the beginning, the middle and finally, the end.

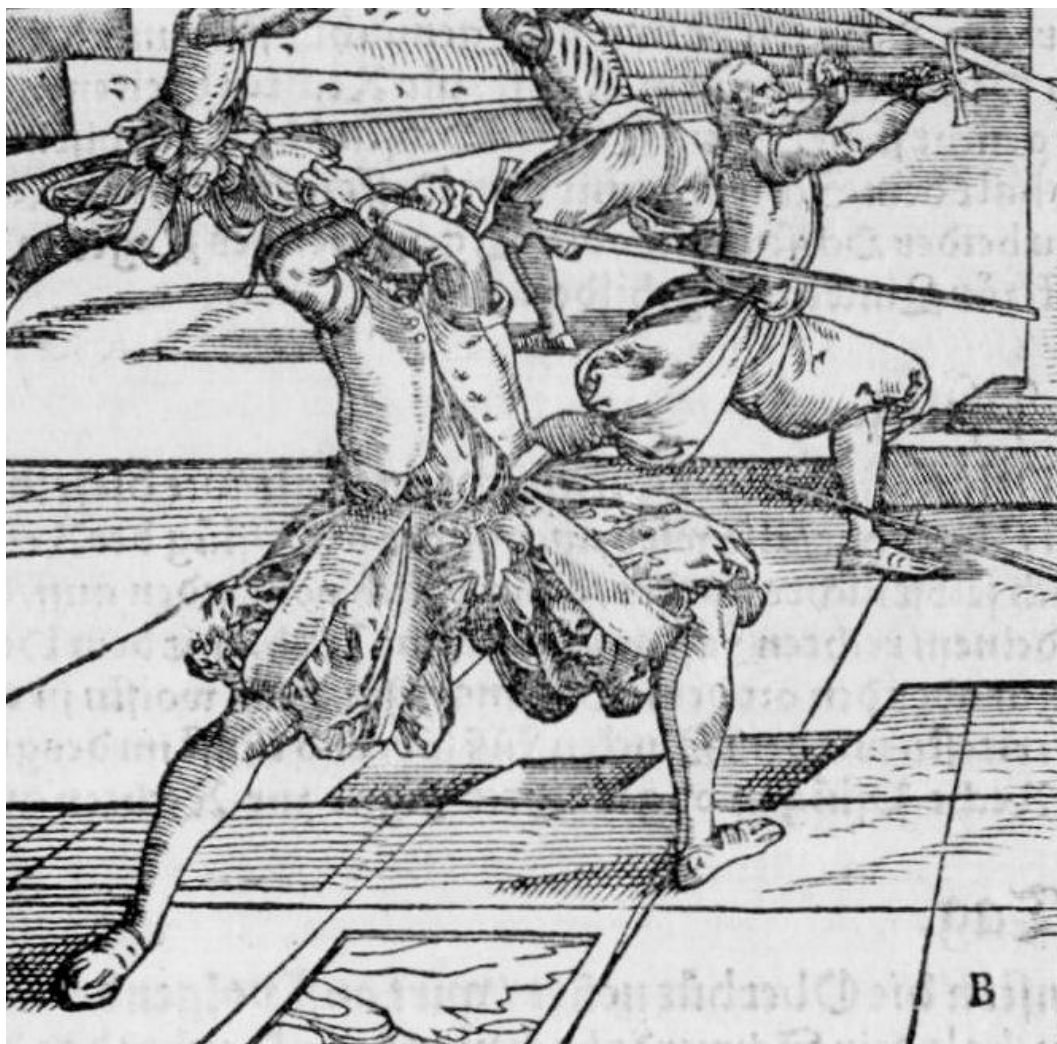
The guards themselves are graceful but also further a more important role in being the positions for the entire body with the sword when the combatant places himself when he is to encounter his opponent. This use of the guards is extremely important to avoid being rushed upon and injured. Once in range of your opponent you will be able to close in and cut with such skill that you will be able to avoid injury; instead when your opponent moves through his openings he will leave himself open while you remove his openings by stepping forward or around. When your opponent is provoked from his position from your attack you may take out his blade and thus intercept and hinder his work.

As I have already explained, the guards have their origins in the divisions on the man. These four divisions are the high, low, left and right. Therefore there are four openings to strike and also four guards from which all other guards originate. These are known as *Ochs*, *Pflug*, *Tag* and *Olber*. From these four guards arise the *Zornhut*, *Langort*, *Wechsel*, *Nebenhut*, *Eisenport*, *Schrankschut*, *Hangetort*, *Schlüssel* and *Einhorn*. I will now discuss these guards in briefly in this order.

PRIMARY GUARDS

OCHS

The upper division of the combatant belongs to *Ochs* and has two quarters, one on the right and the other on the left. Therefore we may divide the posture of *Ochs* into two parts, right and left. Right *Ochs* is performed with your left foot place forward. Hold the sword up and with the hilt up near your head on the right-hand side. Ensure that the tip of your sword points directly to your opponents face. To perform the left *Ochs* you will stand with your right foot forward and stand in reverse of the previous stance. Hold your sword to the left of your head. You now have both *Ochs* guards. This is shown clearly on the left of Image [B].



OCHS [B]

PFLUG

The lower parts of the combatant belong to the guard *Pflug* and if has two sides, right or left and is therefore called right or left. Both sides are merely the positions from which a thrust may originate from below. To stand in right *Pflug* position your right foot forward and with your sword's hilt held low and to your knee. Aim the tip of your sword directly at your opponents face just as if you were about to thrust at him from below. To use left *Pflug* simply stand with your left foot positioned forward and stand in reverse of your previous position. Right *Pflug* is shown clearly in the right of Image [B].



PFLUG [B]

TAG

The guard called *Tag* is also known as *Oberhut* and is carried out by standing with your left foot forward. Hold your sword high above your head with the point extending upwards. Any attacks that you deliver from above are described as being struck from *Tag*, hence the name of this posture. This can be seen clearly in Image [C].



TAG [C]

OLBER/ALBER

In my opinion this guard takes its name from the German word *Alber* which means 'the fool'. From this guard no correct strike can be easily achieved unless you reposition for a new cut following a parry. I consider this to truly be the fool as to allow your opponent to strike at you without an adequate counterstroke is the measure of a fool. *Alber* is performed by standing with the left foot forward and the tip of the sword extended to the floor in front of you. Ensure that the short edge faces upwards and the long edge faces the ground. You can see this guard in the right of Image [C].



OLBER [C]

SECONDARY GUARDS

ZORNHUT

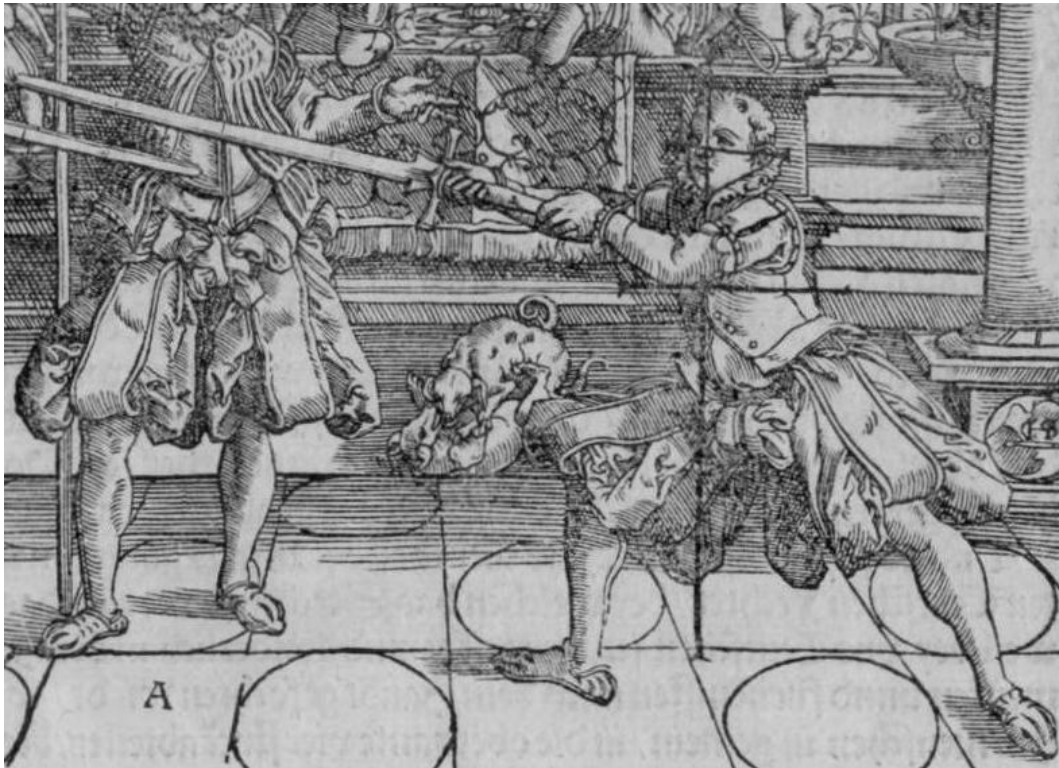
The guard *Zornhut* (Wrath Guard) takes its name because this position demonstrates a wrathful attitude. The guard is executed by standing with your left leg forward and with the sword on your right shoulder in such a way that the blade hangs low ready for a strike. It should be noted here that all techniques that may be initiated from *Ochs* may also be carried out from this position, except for those that use different approaches to deceive your opponent. This can be clearly seen in Image [E].



ZORNHUT [E]

LANGORT

To perform *Langort* stand with your left foot forward and hold your sword with your arms extended in front of your face and your tip pointing at your opponents face. This can be seen by the figure in Image [A].



LANGORT [A]

WECHSEL

The *Wechsel* is performed by standing with your right foot forward, and holding your sword or weak extended down to the ground and at your side. The short edge of your sword will face your opponent as can be clearly seen in Image [D].



WECHSEL [D]

NEBENHUT

To perform the guard *Nebenhut*, stand with your left foot forward and hold your sword by your right side. Aim the point towards the ground so that the pommel stand upwards and the short edge of the sword faces towards you.

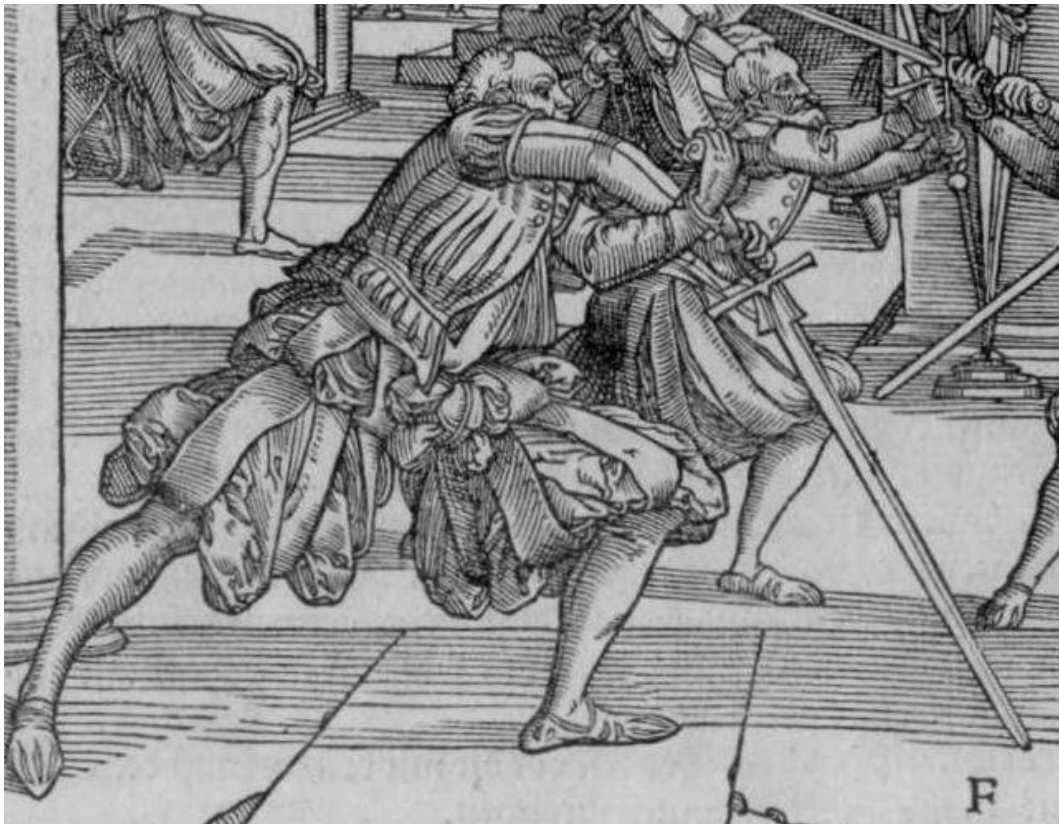
EISENPORT

The full details of the true *Eisenport* will be shown in more detail in the treatise on rapier combat. Because thrusting is now abolished among us Germans this guard has been lost and fallen into disuse. These days the Italians and some other nations use it. Today the term is roughly the same as the *Schrankschut*, and it is by the more inexperienced due to their lack of knowledge of the true *Eisenport*.

There is a difference between them, and I will explain it briefly here. To perform the *Eisenport* stand with your right foot forward and hold your sword out and in front with the hilt in front of your knee with straight hanging arms. Ensure that your point is extended towards your opponent's face. You will now find your sword in front of you for protection much like an iron door (*Eisenport*). When you stand with your feet spaced wide apart and your body low in this position you can put away all cuts and thrusts.

SCHRANKHUT

The *Schrankhut* is performed by holding your sword with crossed hands in front of you and with the tip of the sword pointed to the ground. This can be seen in Image [F].



SCHRANKHUT [F]

HANGETORT

The figure on the right-hand side of Image [F] shows you how to execute the *Hangetort* apart from the arms are not extended enough. To execute the posture correctly stand with your right foot forward and hold your sword with your arms extended out in front of you so that the blade hangs towards slightly. This posture is similar to the Ochs except that in Ochs the arms are held vertically but where the arms are extended forward in front of your face and with the point of your sword hanging down, hence the name *Hangetort*.

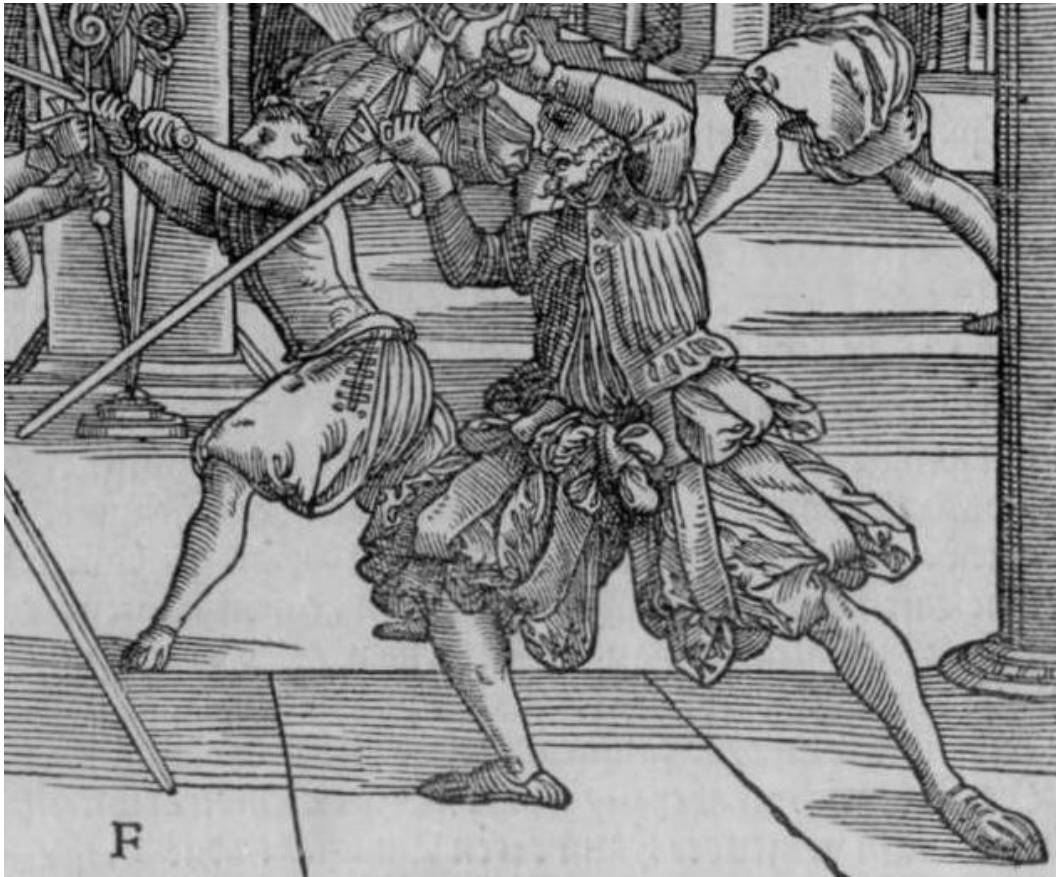


IMAGE [F]

SCHLÜSSEL

The guard *Schlüssel* is executed by standing with your left foot forward. Hold your sword so that the hilt and your crossed hands are directly in front of your chest. The short edge will rest on your forearm and the tip of your sword will face your opponent's face. This can be clearly seen in Image [D].



SCHLÜSSEL [D]

EINHORN

In *Zufechten*, stand with your left foot forward and *Flugel* upwards on both sides as though you intended to stand in the guard *Schlüssel*. Push your crossed hands upwards to your right so that the tip points up into the air. This guard is called *Einhorn* and you stand as shown by the figure on the right of Image [E].



EINHORN [E]

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CUTS

OBERHAU/SCHIEDELHAU

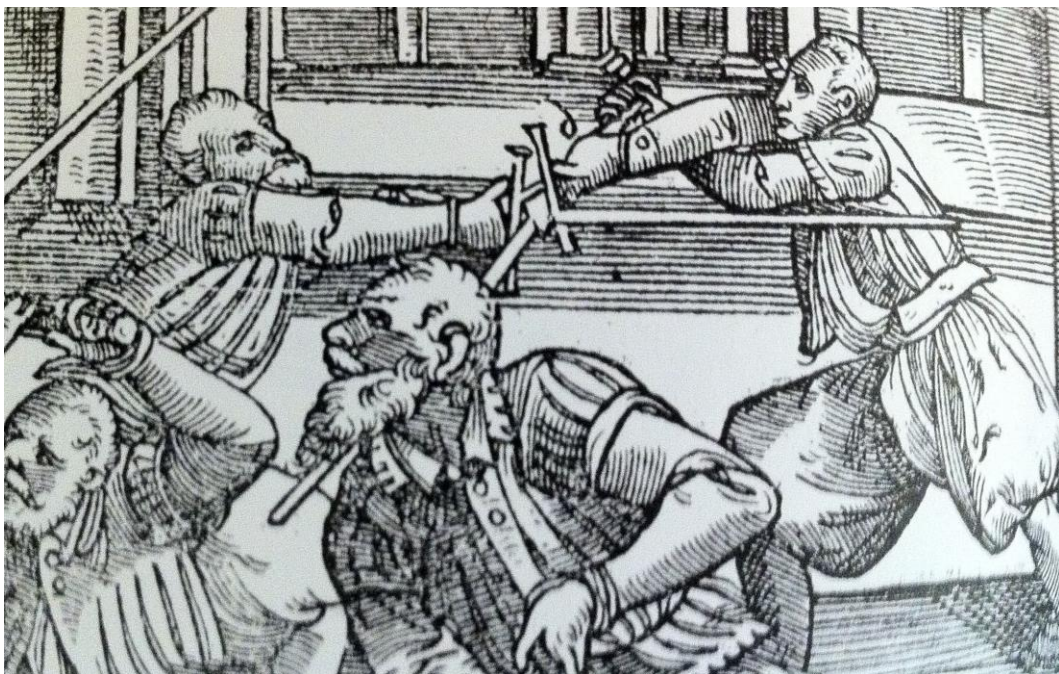
<COMING SOON>

ZORNHAU

<COMING SOON>

KRUMPHAU

The *Krumphau* (Crooked Cut) is executed by standing in *Zornhut*, with your left foot forward. If your opponent then cuts at you, step with your right foot to your left and well out from his attack towards his left-hand side. Cut at him with the long edge and crossed-hands against his cut, or across against his hands between his head and his blade, and let your blade move well over his arm as shown in Image [D] by the figures in the top right.



KRUMPHAU [D]

SCHIELHAU

<COMING SOON>

ZWERCHAU

<COMING SOON>

MITTELHAU

<COMING SOON>

UNTERHAU

<COMING SOON>

KURTZHAU

If your opponent cuts at you from above then act as though you intended to strike his blade with a *Krumphau* but instead cut short and quickly move your blade under his and strike with the short-edge and crossed arms over his right arm and to his head. You have caught his sword with the long-edge of your sword and executed the *Kurtzhau* (*Short Cut*). You will stand at the end of the technique as shown in the figure in Image [B] on the top left.



KURTZHAU [B]

GLUTZHAU

<COMING SOON>

PRELLHAU

<COMING SOON>

BLENDTHAU

<COMING SOON>

WINDTHAU

<COMING SOON>

KRONHAU

<COMING SOON>

KNIECHELHAU

<COMING SOON>

STURTZHAU

<COMING SOON>

WECHSELHAU

<COMING SOON>

SCHNELLER/ZECKRUR

<COMING SOON>

CHAPTER FIVE: THE HANDWORK

CHAPTER<COMING SOON>

CHAPTER SIX: ABZUG

<COMING SOON>

CHAPTER SEVEN: STEPPING

<COMING SOON>

CHAPTER EIGHT: VOR, NACH, GLEICH AND INDES

<COMING SOON>