

Book of the Greatness of the Sword

by
Luis Pacheco de Narváez

(first three parts)

Translation by Tim Rivera

Note: Some technical terminology remains untranslated. For others, the original Spanish terminology is listed in footnotes at the term's first appearance.

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BOOK
OF THE GREATNESS
OF THE SWORD
IN WHICH ARE DECLARED MANY
secrets which Commander Geronimo
de Carranza declared.

*In which each one will be able to give lessons and learn alone,
without needing to be taught by a master.*

Directed to our lord, *Don Felipe III*,
King of the Spains and most of
the world.

*Composed by Don Luis Pacheco de Narváez, native of
the city of Baeza, resident of the Grand Canary Island,
and Sergeant-Major of the island
of Lanzarote.*

WITH PRIVILEGE

In Madrid, by the heirs of Juan Íñiguez
de Lequerica, in the year 1600.

This book has 88 sheets of paper, sold in the street of Santiago.

*The summary of what this book contains will be found on the
page before folio 1.*

Approbation

I have seen this book of the Greatness of the Sword, composed by *Don Luis Pacheco de Narváez*, which touches on arms and their demonstrations, which is the point that was committed to me. I have found everything very curious and of great certainty, because it continues and declares in demonstrative practice the book of the theory of Commander Geronimo de Carranza, the first inventor of this science. In bringing it to light, it advances the common good and advantage, by having much doctrine and erudition, which shows that it has cost its author much work and study, and deserves the mercy of privilege and license to print. In Madrid, June 17, 1599.

Don Francisco de Herrera y de Saavedra

ASSESSMENT

I Pedro Zapata del Marmol, chamber scribe of His Majesty, of those that his council resides in, have faith that the lords of the council, having seen the book entitled Greatness of the Sword, composed by *Don* Luis Pacheco de Narváez, and printed with his license, have appraised each sheet of said book at three-and-a-half *maravedís*.¹ Said book has eighty-eight sheets, which at said price come to three-hundred eight *maravedís*, each volume of said book in paper. They commanded that it be sold at said price, and no more, and that this assessment is placed at the beginning of each one of said books. For the record of the commandment of said lords of the council, I gave the present. Made in the town of Madrid, March 9, 1600.

Pedro Zapata del Marmol

¹ A *maravedí* was the smallest unit of monetary value in Spain at the time, equal to 1/34 of a *real*.

To our lord, the king

THE strength of my excuse to dare to dedicate this book to Your Majesty is in two reasonable considerations. The first is knowing that poetic genius dares to dedicate one composed of accents to Virgil, being the most celebrated poet ever, and Marco Barron, who wrote in the Latin tongue to Marcus Tullius, prince and artifice of it, as well as Paulo Orosio's history to Saint Augustine, who was able to learn for all his life. The other is knowing that the alchemists say that there is a Philosopher's Stone of such marvelous properties and such strange and natural virtue that it will be enough to transmute any metal that it touches completely into gold. The first (having certain knowledge of the clemency of Your Majesty, which is as even-handed as it is powerful) is half daring, however knowing that dedicating a book of the sword and propositions of *destreza*² to Your Majesty is wanting to bring a log to the mountain,³ or presuming to teach an eagle to fly. On the second, one comes to a true knowledge that the very fine Philosopher's Stone (with not just one virtue, but innumerable virtues combined) is Your Majesty, and that joining the humble cover of this rough work will be enough to change it into gold of inestimable value; that which is undeserving due to being mine will be supplemented by the elevated carats of such a powerful hand and sublime value. I humbly supplicate Your Majesty to receive this small service with the profound humility that I offer; if it is not (as I certainly understand it) as I should do, at least it is all that I could do. By being the fruit of my humble understanding, if it would be protected by such a sovereign power, I would be joyfully obligated again to offer other services to Your Majesty, whose catholic person God keeps for many happy years, as christianity has deserved. From your humble and loyal servant,

Don Luis Pacheco de Narváez

² skill

³ A phrase meaning to bring an object to a place which already has an abundance.

THE KING

IT has been related to us that you, *Don* Luis Pacheco de Narváez, native of the city of Baeza, resident of the Grand Canary Island, had composed a book entitled Greatness of the Sword, in which many secrets were declared from the book that Commander Geronimo de Carranza had composed on the philosophy and *destreza* of arms, with its true application in demonstrations, into which you had placed much work, care, and study, seeking the common good, so that each one could be better defended. You supplicated us, and we commanded to give you license and privilege to print for ten years, or however long our mercy may be. Seen by those of our council, by it's decree, the diligence was made for the law ultimately made by us on the printing of the books. It was agreed that we should give our permit to you for said reason. It seems good to us, for which we give license and faculty, so that for a time of ten years, first following, which run and are counted from the date of my permit, for you or the person that you may have, and no other, to print and sell said book, heretofore giving notice, by the original that was seen in our council, which is initialed and signed at the end by Pedro Zapata del Marmol, our council chamber's scribe.

With that, before it is sold, bring the original before them, so that it is seen whether said impression conforms to it, or bring credit in public form by a censor named by us, having seen and corrected said impression by the original. We command the printer who would print said book, to not print the beginning and the first sheet, nor deliver more than only one original book to the author or a person at whose cost it would be printed, nor to some other person, for the effect of said correction and assessment, before first said book is corrected and assessed by those of our council. That being done, and not in any other manner, you can print said beginning and first sheet, placing in this our permit and the approbation that said book was made by our mandate, and the assessment and errata, on pain of the penalties contained in the laws and decrees of these kingdoms in which they are stipulated. We command that, during said ten-year term, no person can print or sell said book without your license. One who would print and sell it has lost and loses any and all books, molds, and equipment that said book would have, and incurs a penalty of five-hundred thousand *maravedís*: one-third for the council, another third for the judge that would sentence him, and the other third for the person that denounced him.

We command those of our council, speaker, and listeners of our audiences, magistrates, constables of our house and court, and chancellors, and to all the administrators, assistants, governors, chief and ordinary magistrates, and whatever other judges and justices, of all cities, villages, and places of our kingdoms and estates, those now as well as those that will be henceforth, which observe and comply with our permit. They do not go against nor pass its tenor and form, nor consent to go nor pass in any manner, under penalty of our mercy, and ten thousand *maravedís* for our council. Dated in Barcelona, June 29, 1599.

I, the king.

By command of our lord, the king.

Don Luis de Salazar

Elegy to *Don* Luis Pacheco de Narváez, in praise of his book, from Bartolomé Cairasco de Figueroa, canon of the holy church of the Canary Islands.⁴

Sonnet to the book of the author, from Serafín Caraiso de Figueroa, warden of the fortress of the Grand Canary Island.

Sonnet to the book and the author, from the licensed Gabriel Gómez de Palacios, ruler of the island of La Palma, one of the Canary Islands.

Sonnet to the author, from the licensed Luis Ortiz de Padilla, ruler of the Canary Island, and lawyer of its royal audience.

Sonnet to the reader, from sergeant-major Liranzo.

Sonnet to the author, from Iván Centellas, resident of the Grand Canary Island.

Sonnet to the author, from Rodrigo Núñez de la Peña, native of the island of Tenerife, one of the Canary Islands.

Sonnet to the reader, from *Don* Pedro de Barros y Montesier.

Sonnet from *Don* Alonso Carrillo de Albornoz.

Sonnet to the author and the book, from *Don* Diego de Pareja Velarde.

Sonnet from Hernondo de Soto, accountant and inspector of the house of Castilla of their Majesty.

In praise of weapons and the author, from *Don* Félix Arias Girón.

4 Elegies and sonnets have not been translated, but their titles have been included.

PROLOGUE TO THE READER

in which it is proven that the *destreza*
of arms that is dealt with here
is a science.

AMONG the precepts of natural law, the one whose jurisdiction covers the most and is most generally kept (dear reader), is that of the conservation of one's own nature in all creatures, sentient as well as insentient, rational as well as irrational. This was the reason that Aristotle said that all things that exist desire to be, and they do all things for the conservation of their being, and elsewhere, that all men naturally flee from death and desire a very long life. Since it is already well-known that each animal, however weak it may be, is diligent in defending itself from whatever would want to injure it, and to injure it for its defense. As man, by being more noble than all those together, had more necessity to conserve itself, has been injured many times (which are full of pain and grief) by other men. As the adage says "Man is the wolf of man," an art was necessary that taught how one had to make this defense that served to protect against an enemy as powerful, with as much strength and malice, as man itself, its sworn enemy, not inasmuch as man and its nature since, as Saint Augustine says, all natures have in themselves a peace and natural concord.

In that way, war that man has trumpeted against man doesn't proceed from nature, but from malice and envy. So that this defense is worked better, it sought to be placed in art, which endures for many years. But as malice was strengthened until coming to greater heights than it has ever seen, and the men that had been governed by it were in such discomposure, seeking the same, not just as wolves, but as ferocious tigers, very much like what was said in Proverbs, that as the wicked increase, evil multiplies.⁵ This is in as much extreme as the present revolutions testify, greater remedy agreed to greater malice and greater persecution. This defense being so necessary and deserving for man, possessed and tyrannized by doubtful and uncertain opinions, each one wanting to have their own. Our lord God wanted the damaged spirits of disconcerted and fearful men to be restrained, so that the still, peaceful lovers of glorious peace didn't suffer at the hands of the former due to lacking defense, giving opportunity and permitting it to be reduced to science, so that due to its stability and certainty, it did not lack and always remains, like the other sciences. I don't doubt this; rather, I am very certain that he wanted it to happen in this corner of Spain, where the holy faith is professed and kept, and its very holy name is adored and revered. Even though we wanted to understand the men who wanted to tell us they would understand what it was, so that, well-instructed in it, we would defend the faith and holy church from the heretical tyrants.

They pursued it with which such force and rigor, without ever passing by the thought of a christian man putting hand to sword against another, but as being brothers and sons of the same father, who is Christ, or accordingly, as Saint Peter advises us, a mystic body, whose head is our lord Christ, that we are conserved in sweet peace and amicable concord. As man had to be the one who did this, he was also served that luck fell on Commander Geronimo de Carranza, whose understanding and genius he wanted to favor through wine to attain such a glorious trophy. It is of no less consideration that this was conceded to the worthy and famous city of Seville, fertile mother of admirable and clarified understanding, that we will be able to very justly say that such a mother deserved to have such a son, and such a son deserved to be from such an illustrious mother. This prologue only goes to the field announcing war, being placed in opposition of the incredulous of this true *destreza* being a science. In arriving here, it will be possible that some contrariness is represented, challenging it to a delayed battle with the weapons of ignorance and envy; it will be necessary for us to leave the words of incitement and come to the weapons of arguments, definitions, and conclusions. The godfather that has been chosen is Aristotle, who one will know to defend it well. The first meeting will be to say that this *destreza* is a science, and is proven very clearly by the place of dialectic and rhetoric, which is proving by definition that which is defined. As we said: If it is a rational animal; then it follows that it is a man. Thus we say if this art falls under the definition of science, then it is a science.

The antecedent is proven, supposing first the definition of science; according to Aristotle in the first of his Posterior Analytics, science is a habit that engenders necessary and evident consent by demonstration, which is to say by syllogism or argumentation, that proceeds by a thing's own principles, and itself and the causes of such a thing are known. In no other manner can such an effect be made, as the astrologer who says that the eclipse is caused by the interposition of the earth between the sun and the moon. This interposition is its own principle and cause of such an eclipse, and in no other manner can it be caused naturally. This scientific syllogism makes all interposition of the earth between the sun and the moon cause an eclipse; if today or tomorrow such interposition is done, then it follows that it will be an eclipse. That which is naturally infallible is a demonstrative syllogism, which causes science. This supposed, it is proven that this definition fits this art, because it proceeds through such demonstrations, through clauses and manifests, in philosophy as well as geometry, because it deals with natural movements, slow and fast, and with their effects and the natural complexions of men, and their strengths and limbs, which is necessary for the knowledge of wounding and defending. It deals with geometric figures, circles, angles, lines, and Euclidean propositions, which are self-evident principles. Although the principles in this art are not proven here, they are supposed to have already been proven; this doesn't prevent it from being called and being a science, as also music, and other mathematics receive their proven principles in their previous sciences, which are subaltern, as music is to arithmetic, and painting to perspective, and theology to the science that the blessed have, and due to that, they cannot cease being sciences.

That's not to say that since this art consists of such different sciences, that it is not a science itself, because although these principles are from various sciences, they all concur in one formal reason, which is to know how to wound and be defended, which is its object. This science pertains to the part of philosophy that consists of action, because philosophy is either speculative, whose only end is obtaining knowledge, or it consists of action, whose end is to work; this action is either internal to man which pertains to the spirit, as is all the moral philosophy (ethical for man to itself, economic for governing ones family and house, and political for governing the republic), or it is external to man, which pertains to governing ones body (such as medicine to heal it, agriculture and hunting to feed it, theater and comedies to ease it, navigation to carry it, wool working to clothe it, and *destreza* to defend it). According to Aristotle, things taken together take the name of the end for which they are ordered. Although that being said is enough for it to be a science, as it is, we don't suppose everything, but go ahead proving it with the definitions of the same science and application of *destreza*. According to the definition in the first of Aristotle's Posterior Analytics, science is a knowledge of a thing by its cause, and it will not happen that what the cause shows has been in any other manner; this definition was approved by all the Greeks and Latins.

There can be no doubt that the science of arms fits this definition, since in itself it has the same knowledge of a thing by its cause: to know that which has to be wounded, and the strike⁶ that has to be done to make it, and the instrument with which it has to be done, and the determined proportionate mean⁷ in order to do it. Because all that is seen and known through causes and scientific means, and likewise a scientific syllogism is made (having first supposed infallibly that for whatever strike of whatever species⁸ that it is, has to have movements of arm and body, or each thing by itself): saying my opponent lifts his arm, making a violent movement,⁹ I will say then that he necessarily has to have a natural movement¹⁰ in order to execute some strike, and if he will lift the sword to the obtuse angle,¹¹ I will know because I have it proven by mathematical demonstration (as will be seen ahead) that positioning myself in right angle,¹² I will reach him to wound without him being able to do the same. This is infallible, because I first know the cause, and from this knowledge, I come to have true notice of the effect that has to happen. If this knowledge would have been by the effect, I would say that I see that my opponent gave me a wound, then there was movement. Since science is a firm knowledge of a thing acquired with a long discourse of days, which never parts from reason, and this knowledge is not altered due to the variety of effects; it can be understood that *destreza* is a science, as the known effects of already known causes are never altered. If science is that whichever cause produces infallible effects, that of *destreza* is knowingly the same, as we know whichever movement that necessarily has to be for *tajo*, *revés*,¹³ or thrust, according to the species of each one, effects already known by their causes, in which a syllogism has to be made also certain, saying:

6 *herida*

7 *medio proporcionado*

8 This follows Aristotle's classification system of specific forms (species in Latin) of a kind of thing (genus in Latin).

9 *movimiento violento*

10 *movimiento natural*

11 *angulo obtuso*

12 *angulo recto*

13 *Tajo* is a forehand cut, that is, one that is executed from the same side as the sword hand. *Revés* is the a backhand cut.

The strike of *tajo* or *revés* has to consist of four movements, and participation of two angles (as we will declare in its place). Not being preceded by such movements, it will not have said effects; just as there will be no eclipse without having interposition, and vice versa. Finally, in order to be science, it has to deal with universals since, as Aristotle says, there is none that deals with particulars. *Destreza* has to be a science, as it is, since it deals with the universal; this is certain, proven in this manner: the universal technique¹⁴ counters *tajo*, *revés*, and thrust; this is killing all the movements placed in action, and many in potency, at their beginnings as well as their middles and ends, whichever species that they may be. The strikes are infallibly composed of movements; these being dead, there will be no strikes. Effect is that which touches speculation; that which suits the action will be seen in the discourse of this book. With all that, we make it clear that the *destreza* of arms is truly a science, inasmuch as it teaches a universal impediment, and that this *destreza* is a knowledge and habit that teaches one to give a strike and defend the opponent's strike, and it is that which teaches what man has to be guarded against, and that which has to be done to not be in danger, but not necessarily to wound, as we will demonstrate in the fifth part of this book, where it will be shown scientifically, through evident demonstrations, how a man can be conserved and guarded from his enemies, in the use of the sword.

14 *treta*

According to what Geronimo de Carranza alleges, science is nothing other than a scientific exercise of that which one knows. With this, this literary joust is won, and the truth of *destreza* leaves prevailing honorably, whose certainty will never be doubted. Receive this, beloved reader, where what I offer you is of such importance and value for an end as important as your defense and conservation. With a thousand appreciations, I ask and supplicate you, that as this science itself, and the sciences that favor it, are certain and infallible themselves, do not permit (my cause not dealing with it as it deserves, as its first inventor dealt with it) that in its estimation and surrendering the credit which is reason, that it loses something. Take advantage of my desire for benefit and security, which you will reach due to its great certainty, and receive my goodwill that, at a cost of much work that I have suffered, I want no more than to succeed in pleasing you, and understanding that by how much that I owe you, by being my neighbor, whom I have no less obligation to love and seek to conserve than myself, according to the divine precept, I have served you in something.

EPISTLE OF THE AUTHOR

in response to another of one of his friends, at whose insistence this book was made, and on which it is based.

IF the laws of friendship will not obligate such, and the precepts of them will not force friends to obey them, and this obligation (in me for you) will not be more particular than in others, neither will I take work and load such weight on my shoulders, nor will it be within me to reveal (to my detriment) the poor volume of my understanding. But between the wills that are bound with the strong tie of friendship, there has to be no repugnance, by having converted both into one. According to that celebrated saying of Tullius¹⁵ that a friend is another me; as your own, I decided to follow your inclination. Although in placing the hand on such high work and material, temerity will seem more inconsiderate than virtuous obedience. I don't know how it will go among those that pursue fiscal facts of foreign works with such strength, as if they were knowingly bad. No other reason is necessary than it not being theirs, and most times they don't understand them, seeming that they are made notably aggrieved by one daring to write, although the verses of *Don Gaiferos* are becoming another curious Lancelot and Mesopotonio, Erasmico, who are always occupied in appraising foreign abilities and murmuring of the most excellent, as if it was a rustic swineherd, in all similar to that grand murmurer Zoilo, whose bad-speaking mouth was never open except to speak ill.

15 Marcus Tullius Cicero

Being asked why he had such an abominable custom, he responded, because if I want to do wrong, I can't; due to that, I say that when these detractors want to do some work of erudition, and their ingenuity doesn't have the talent for it, they resort to their tongue, in which, like the serpent, they have the weapons, speaking ill of all, because they are ashamed that others excel more than they do. It happens that most of the time they place blame on cases where the guilty (according to their judgment) deserve award and prize. But against all these, I take obeying you as shield and defense, and it suits you to defend this cause and defend me, as you are the one I give my pen to. You ask me for your letter; I send you particular advice and order, which serves you as preceptor or master, so that with it, you alone can take advantage of the true *destreza* of arms. In order to persuade me to it, you remind me of that saying of the divine Plato, and other Latin authors, that men are not born for only ourselves, nor for only our advantage, and that of Tullius, that says that we owe part of us to our homeland and part to our friends, and that one of the principal reasons why men were born was to help other men. Asking Leotychidas what the sons of knights should learn when young, he replied: that which is advantageous when they come to the age of manhood. In your estimation, nothing else can advantage them as much (other than being virtuous) as the science of arms, since by them we are respected by our friends and feared by our enemies, defending us from them when they want to take our life.

With them we defend the faith, sustain the homeland in quietude, achieve honor, and conserve that which our past left us. Since I commenced writing on this matter, taking much care with it, certifying to you, some friends with which I have communicated, it is just to do the same with you, advising you how you can conserve life if someone inconsiderately or maliciously wanted to take it from you – reasons which are certainly enough to obey and serve you, but not without much fear (the caution that you say I have placed). This is what makes me deserve something, because I have worked ten continuous years, part of them studying, and most in placing it in the state that you see it, because its first inventor, who was Commander Geronimo de Carranza, wrote so profoundly on it, as his writings show, but it was on theory, and not on demonstrative practice. As Tullius and Pliny say, there is no art so easy that it can be understood without interpretation and great exercise. Considering that it was a hidden treasure, had by few men, by not understanding or knowing its value with such ease that it did not cost them work, I determined, although the greatness and excellence of it and of its author making notable aggravation, to manifest and declare that which my understanding was able to perceive, and that which my ingenuity was able to work many times, fatiguing it more than that which I would be able to reach with its flight, because I not only worked by day, but also at night. With the perseverance of my work and study, experiencing it many times in order to convince me of its certainty, I came to make a small volume, that I kept in my desk.

The times that the military occupations gave me relief, the sword leaving the hand or the arquebus from the shoulder, I spent much time reading, because that which is a work of our ingenuity is loved, and each time that we see it, we rejoice again; it is an ordinary thing to love that which costs us much work. This came to be understood by some particular gentleman friends, and they importuned me to allow it be looked over. Although on my part, I had made the diligence that appeared to me to be enough to understand its certainty in writing, I didn't dare to teach it due to a somewhat justified fear that I was not adorned with the elegance of rhetoric that suited it. But in the end, the excess of friendship defeated my fear, and by the laws of it I asked them (supposing not being able to deny what they asked) to keep it secret so that it and I were not reprehended in public, giving the excuse that it was not finished (as in effect it was not). In the end they saw it, and I don't know if friendship was the reason, or something good that they found in it, but it incited them to persuade me with many truths, and I continued it until I was able to bring it to light. Although this was my first intent, in the middle of the course I feared putting eyes on the consideration that I dared much and offered to suffer more. This fear increased, coming and considering that if biting tongues and envious and harmful intentions pursued its first author (being the principal trunk), that not having thrown the roots of his authority to such depths, in some manner they prevailed against him, that some envious wind wilted this small sprout for some time, because false opinions usually have authority in some intervals, although truth prevails in the end.

I placed all this in front of them, in order to excuse me from their demand, being content to have it in draft for only my pleasure, without placing it to be judged by many that are deprived of virtuous things. In the end, their persuasions were more capable on me than the excuses that I gave them, and my fear gave them spirit, and they reduced my tepidity to confidence, from which returning to pass with attention and communicating with learned persons, it would be able to go public. What they convinced me with the most was in saying that it would be advantageous to many (which is my particular zeal), serving the very daring as a bridle, so that they deal with the arms from here on with prudence, and serving the fearful as spurs, as it is certain that the spirit is augmented with the art. This was the most sufficient cause that defeated my will, to follow theirs, and with much work and study, I came to reduce it to demonstrative practice, with demonstrations so clear (in my opinion, and many others) that any understanding will be quiet, and their spirits will be so appeased that none will perturb them, without being fatigued as much as mine, by knowing in the state in which it has to remain, after having given the wound or formed the parry,¹⁶ for all to be without danger. With all this, I was not determined to publish it, remembering that saying of Ovid, as he says that the truth engenders hate and enmity; as my principal intent was to declare truths, and using the strength of them to destroy the false opinions and liars that ravage and unsettle the judgment, making the false appear true, and the doubtful certain, and the notably harmful advantageous.

16 *reparo*

I distrusted that my work had the due acceptance that it deserves, because those who follow inconsiderately are such that they throw themselves into the dangerous gulf of vulgar opinions and deceit, like it was a safe port, following their opinion in all, which most of the time is the cause of paying the cost of their perdition, in notable danger. Although each day they suffer and see themselves through experience, which their malice doesn't allow them to know. The tie is so strong that, in their opinion and inclination, some will leave it with difficulty and rather die ignorant than live disillusioned, due to the difficulty of being persuaded of that which our will doesn't want. The harm that comes from here is having one's understanding blinded, so that they cease understanding, and that one who will navigate through the dangerous sea of *destreza* without the governance and reason of science will be flooded in any gulf, and will be lost in any shallows. As the wise say, one who loves danger will die from it. Being just, they considered that things do not have to be esteemed by how they appear from outside, because the exterior deceives most of the time – the gold with which they are gilded being false, and the copper that they are composed of being low. The man who wants to succeed does not have to do that which his appetite requires, nor that which his inclination brings, but that which reason will advise. Remembering that which Casiodoro¹⁷ says in the third epistle, that science purifies customs and teaches one to live well, so that at all points they were placed in its hands, offering obedience to the universal lord of one who truly seeks to know.

17 Casiodoro de Reina

As Quintilian says, it is not a shameful thing for a man to confess that he doesn't know; doing this and seeking it on their part, they will make use of its smoothness, which is such that the palate of those that dispassionately please it is sweeter and smoother than syrup. They will be adorned with temperance in their inconsiderate movements, which is wisely changing advice when they err, since the heart of man is moved and persuaded more with an example than with a million words, which the common sentence of rhetoric affirms. I don't want to spend more time on these; rather, I want to petition those who have professed the ordinary *destreza* from a young age to tell me the work that they have suffered for it, the danger, displeasure, suspicions, shocks, fears, uneasiness, wounds, and deaths they have suffered and seen those that were more resourceful in their techniques to suffer, by merely trusting in them, mostly given by rustic men, without any use in *destreza*. So what is this? Whose fault is this? Will we put it on the *destreza* that they profess, or on those who are the professors? On them, it is not just, because in many, their spirits are so valorous that they would easily undertake heroic things and be able to be conquerors by being knowledgeable in the truth; most times they are adventurously defeated and dead. It only remains to them (however much) time to repent their crazy confidence. So we place it on the vulgar *destreza*, as it is founded without the fundamentals of science. Through this, although all men want to be *diestros*,¹⁸ they cannot achieve it perfectly, because it is the cause of searching for it through such uncertain and dark paths, before they will put their eyes on the murkiness of the danger, that they leave to light with that which they intend.

18 skilled swordsmen

But I don't know what type of confidence animates me, as they have to take note of the good that will be left in the one and studied in the other. In such a manner, they have to study this true *destreza*, which brings well-known advantages in spirit as well as the other nations, and they confessed by themselves, have also come to know to scientifically exercise this true *destreza*. Your letter asks much of me, with respect to the small volume of my understanding, but considering the many obligations that I have to keep, I decided (though not without fear) to begin it. With this, I will compile that which I desire with such truths, which is to serve you, and more on this, which has to be for guarding and conserving your life. If in that, I will also not know to declare how I would like, or you would like, understand that it is not lack of will, but rather it seems to me to be an ordinary thing in man (according to what Tullius says) to not be able to properly explain with words that which they feel or know. Being so, forgive the defects that my pen will make. In recompense for these, I offer my will, since, as Erasmus says, that which is offered with it must be acknowledged.

SUMMARY OF WHAT THIS BOOK CONTAINS

in each of the five parts into which it is divided.

In the First

PROLOGUE to the reader, in which it is proven that the *destreza* of arms that is dealt with here is a science.
An epistle to a friend of the author, at whose insistence the book was made.

The foundations of the true <i>destreza</i> , fol.	1
The elements and signs in the exterior, and composure in the members that one who would profess it has to have for more perfection. It is an important point for the captains that want to lift people, folio	6
The interior elements one has to make use of; it contains five important points, which are, fol.	12
Understanding, and its great importance, fol.	13
Ingenuity, and that which is valued in <i>destreza</i> , fol.	14
Memory, and its role, fol.	16
Prudence, and that which is its charge, fol.	18
Spirit, and its value, fol.	19
What elements the master who would teach this <i>destreza</i> has to have; this point is important to the disciple that would learn it, supposing that one wants to learn from a master, fol.	22
What elements the disciple has to have, who such master has to teach, and some advice is given to the master, how he has to teach it, and at what time, and what he has to exercise first,	

A judgment between the two *destezas*, true and false, where the truth and certainty of the one, and the uncertainty and falsehood of the other, are proven, fol. 32

In the Second

The precepts that one who wants to be a *diestro* has to keep to, in which it is taught how one has to set their feet, which is the first foundation, and how one has to have the arm in order to be well-profiled, all in demonstrations. In this point, it is advised from where each strike of the ordinary *destreza* is formed, and how one has to take the sword, fol. 36

How one has to choose the mean of proportion¹⁹ with equal and unequal swords, which is very importance, fol. 51, 53, 55

A demonstration which manifests how one has to step in *destreza* in order to be safe, fol. 56

Another demonstration, where the rectilinear angles are manifest, and particular things of importance are advised, for wounding as well as being defended, fol. 58

Particular and important advise on the steps,²⁰ and what is a simple step and double step, the feet that each one has to have, and what length the foot has to be, which is of much consideration, fol. 66, 67

A demonstration which manifests the three circles that the arm makes, corresponding to its joints, and each one for what strike, and which will defeat which, fol. 69

Another demonstration which advises the three strikes that there are, which are named the strike of whole circle, half circle, and quarter circle, and which will defeat, fol. 71

¹⁹ *medio de proporción*

²⁰ *compases*

Another demonstration of the chord and the arc, which is the same as circular movement and straight movement, where it is proven which wounds more quickly, fol. 72.

Another very important demonstration which can be considered in *destreza*, where it is shown how the right angle reaches more than any other, fol. 75

A particular demonstration of four lines, which are straight line, parallel lines, circular line, and mixed line, fol. 78

A declaration in which it is advised what a strike is, and what it is composed of, and what is a strike before time, in time, and after time, fol. 84

Third Part

The most common techniques that are practiced and used in the ordinary *destreza* are placed in this part, which are, fol. 88

Crossing the sword in front of the chest, fol. 93

Technique of inviting,²¹ fol. 97

Technique of testing,²² fol. 101

Technique of punching thrust,²³ fol. 105

Most famous technique, which they call *arrebatar*,²⁴ fol. 107

Technique of giving a blow on the sword,²⁵ fol. 112

Terrifying technique that they call ripping *tajo*,²⁶ and the certain

²¹ *llamar*

²² *tentado*

²³ *estocada de puño*

²⁴ beating away

²⁵ *golpe en la espada*

²⁶ *tajo rompido*

remedies against all them, all in demonstrations, fol. 116

Advice on the theory of the *brazal*, and in how many parts it is done, and the slap,²⁷ and thrust to the foot, and to the elbow, and the remedy for all them, fol. 121

Particular advice on which arm – dagger, cloak, buckler, and shield²⁸ – will be able to defend best, fol. 126

More advice on the proportionate mean, what it is, and its importance, fol. 131

Fourth Part

The particulars of the true *destreza* are placed in the fourth part in demonstrations, strikes of first intention as well as second, *tajos*, *reveses*, thrusts and parries, and the manner that Turks position themselves, how one has to wound them, fol. 135

Fifth Part

In the fifth and last part, eight very important points are placed, which are, fol. 243

The exercise that the *diestro* has to have, how one has to exercise, with what sword, and how to exercise the arms, without removing the cloak, sword, nor dagger, and why it is very important, fol. 244

The reason that one has to have to fight, and how without having much, one has to not put hand to sword, which is a point of much doctrine and importance, fol. 248

A very particular rule, of great importance and advantage, how

²⁷ *manotada*

²⁸ *rodela*

the complexion of a man will be known by their physiognomy, with which one will have notice and knowledge if one will be spirited or not, partitioning the year, and the day, and the age of a man, in order to know at what time one is most valiant, and how one has to wound each one, according to the time, age, and complexion, and advised with which of the men – tall, short, or medium – one will be able to be defended best, fol. 252

How the four cardinal movements have to be known, which are violent movement, natural movement, remiss movement,²⁹ and mixed movement,³⁰ fol. 266

The grand importance of touch,³¹ and how without it, the defense of the *diestro* will not be certain, nor will it be able to work universally, with respect to killing the movements with the *atajo*, fol. 272

How important the conservation of breath is to the *diestro*, and how in lacking it, one cannot overcome, nor be defended, and how it has to be conserved, fol. 272

The admirable effects of the universal rule, where it will be seen what it is, and what makes use of it, and how there is no particular strike that is not inferior to it, nor a movement that it doesn't kill. A doubt is placed and declared, with which one can fight however many men, which is a point worthy of being known, fol. 276

Five paths by which the *diestro* has to walk, for the strike of first intention as well as second, whether circular for *tajo* and *revés*, or for thrust, and the quantity that each one has to have, and how much each has to part from the line of the diameter, and the difference that there is between the steps, simple as well as composed, is advised, which is a point that, without understanding it very well and exercising it many times, one

29 *movimiento remiso*

30 *movimiento mixto*

31 *tacto*

will not be able to be a *diestro*, fol.

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The graduation of the sword, where its strength and weakness is manifested by numbers, and how in order to subject the opponent's sword, one has to have an advantage of greater number; this is as important as the above, concluding with the universal in theory as well as in practice, placed in demonstrations, and in all the discourse of the book, many examples and sentences deserving of being read, and benefits to be imitated, fol.

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THE FUNDAMENTALS ON WHICH THE TRUE *DESTREZA* IS FOUNDED

SINCE having commenced obeying you, it is necessary that you first know the elements of this true *destreza* that you want to profess – the strong fundamentals on which it is founded, its lordship and greatness, because it is just that before the will deliberately wants something, the understanding (whose charge is the examination of all) examines and sees if it suits or not. Many times, in not doing this, people learn things that are the cause of their perdition, taking them (as they say) without thought. Having to note the matters that one wants to begin, the outcomes that they can have are looked upon with prudence from the beginning; don't later leave that regret that those who begin and end without this diligence and discerning considerations usually have, nor do they give caution for having to be undone. Because however important a matter, it is much more suitable to examine and look at the means that need to be placed in order to reach it, in order to be certain in it, because a man being deceived in a concept, misunderstanding a verse, not explaining a law well, and similar things, have remedy in returning to look at them, or asking for advice.

Being deceived and erring in a matter as important as knowing how to be defended from the sneakiness and deceits of one's opponent is an error that has no amendment, and no less cost than one's life, or endangering it. Many have seen this through experience in their harm and perdition; in particular the young who, due to their young age, don't have the capacity to seek the means with which one achieves defense of their life, honor, and home, which is the true *destreza* that we deal with. By being a type of virtue which is reached with great age and long experience, or much understanding and great prudence.

The first part
on which this
true *destreza* is
founded.

The first and most principal part that makes it so illustrious and valuable is being certain and true, having its own truth like the other sciences, due to its demonstrations being so evident and infallible. The name of truth is of such majesty and greatness that in saying that something is true, there is no more to say, nor greater appreciation than placing it so, because just as the truth itself is firm and certain, what is founded and promoted in it is certain and firm as well, because the certainty of the effect consists in the certainty of the cause from which it proceeds, but when the beginning or cause is false and uncertain, the effect that will proceed from it has to be false and uncertain. On this truth, Marcus Tullius says that its strength is so great that by itself, without any help, it defends itself from the ambushes of those who maliciously want to conceal it. Because *destreza* has the truth, it has the same effect and always leaves victorious. Truth is that which rules the heavens, lights the earth, sustains justice, governs the republic, confirms what is certain, and clarifies what is doubtful;

it is the center, where all things rest, the north, by which all the world is ruled, and target, where all must travel. Because *destreza* reaches and makes use of this truth, as much as it is possible, it has the same effects, because it rules men, showing them how they have to seek their conservation and defense by certain paths. It illuminates understanding and satisfies it with its evident demonstrations, sustains man and defends ones life and honor when the enemy wants to take it, which is one of its particular effects. It governs this science, advising how and where it has to be sought, confirms in certainty that which was opinion until now, clarifies that which is not certain with its presence, because a contrary with another is known better. It is the center where all the aficionados of men inclined to arms want to rest. It is the north by which all have to rule if they want to succeed. We conclude with the saying of the very wise Socrates, in the first book *De Ira*,³² which says that there is no virtue that the gods reward more willingly than truth, nor a vice that they punish more harshly than a lie. *Destreza* also has these two effects in both, because it rewards men who profess it and deal with it scientifically, giving them success in the end so that they profess it; to those that follow the opposite, it brings the rigorous punishment of danger. As it is certain that that which is not known is not loved; that said, it is well-known what truth is, and the *destreza* which makes use of it, and how great its virtue and excellence, which is well-proven. We move forward.

Effects of
destreza.

32 *De Ira* (On Anger) is by Seneca, rather than Socrates.

Second part
on which
destreza is
founded.

The other part that it has, which is no less excellent, is that this marvelous edifice of *destreza* is founded on such strong fundamentals that neither will the rigor of time consume it, nor will it ever age, nor will it lose one point from its being, because whichever part that you see, you will find that it is supported by the solid walls of the sciences, which help it with the truth that each one has by itself, and favor it with their certainty, and make it stronger, adding strength to strength. This is such that if mathematics itself has certainty and truth, *destreza* is shown by it, and strengthens it with its demonstrations. If arithmetic itself has truth and certainty, *destreza* is accompanied by it, because it deals with account and reason. If natural philosophy uncovers and manifests many secrets to us, the same declares those that *destreza* has. Since its first inventor, in the speculation of each one, raised the strings of his understanding to such a point that the most advanced in it have been admired in the order of the subalternation of the ancient sciences with the newly invented. On *destreza*, for which a book was made so curious and appealing, as profound in sentences as the rest are lacking, I remit it to you, where you will be able at your pleasure to fill your hands with your desire. The lordship and greatness that it has is such that a man who will soldier under its protection will have dominion and power over others' wills. There is truly no greater key to open them than a wise man, and they receive it because the science that it professes is the reason that all respect, love, and favor it, but in no part is it found strange.

The lordship
that this
destreza has.

As Diogenes says: the wise man is a citizen of the whole world, and he lacks nothing anywhere; with it, he has safe passage and a letter of recommendation for all. Aristippus confirms that in the response that he gave to those that asked him what the difference was between a wise man and a fool, saying: Send them both naked among strange people, and you will see the difference that there is. Meaning that the wise man, although he is naked in a strange land, brings with him the treasure of his wisdom, because of which he will not lack friends, and the naked fool will only find those who laugh at him. Already one is in danger of dying of hunger, because as the works of man uncover the greatness of his genius, and science is very high, and according to Aristotle, good is the best thing in the world because all desire it. Being as it is the object of our will, where it wants a scientific man to go surely, because he has provision for all his life, and the fool loses this and many other things that could be said for this proposition. We will conclude this point with one from Socrates; this learned man says that science is the only good, and conversely, ignorance is the only evil. The reason is because ignorance is the cause of all the ills that are committed, and science is the cause of all the good that is done. Because that which is praised, wanting to give praise to it is taking it away. The rest that is lacking in this, I remit to your understanding.

THE EXTERIOR ELEMENTS AND SIGNS,
and composure in the limbs that one who will have to
profess this true *destreza* has to have for more
perfection.

AS we have given the most excellent parts, fundamentals, and greatness of this science, and it has been proven with reasons founded in reason, it will be just that you know those that one who wants to profess it has to have. So that you are not deceived, nor anyone is deceived in understanding, as a tree without a lord will be able to take advantage of its fruit, and it is necessary that there is much consideration in this, and that no one is positioned to learn science who doesn't have his ingenuity disposed, and in particular to this, where such elements are required. Because someone who knows themselves will have doubt, being as human presumption is such that one who had less elements will imagine themselves a Solomon in wisdom, an Aristotle in liveliness of ingenuity, a Caesar in spirit, and a Hector in strength, and will dare to think to run rings around one who will make more use of this. I want to enumerate and give the elements that have to be used in the exterior, and the signs with which one will be able to know, so that none are deceived – those that will want to learn, as well as those that will want to teach.

The men that the ancient Romans chose for war, with the desire that they had to be conquerors, and subject the world, and lord over it, were searched for with such caution, and the captains received them with such modesty, as if each one was for captain, or in each one by himself would bring the end of the desired victory. This was a very just consideration, because the congregation of an army is like the composition of an antidote, which is composed and formed of various things, and none by itself causes the effect that it's composed for, but all together. In this way, many strengths are joined from many people, and a potency is affirmed by these strengths, which all together – people, strengths, and potency – cause the effect for which they are ordained, which is to defeat the enemy and conquer the field from the opponent. Because of that, they searched for them, such that each one helped with his virtue and effort, without some having harmed and frightened the others. Because according to Vegetius in *De Re Militari*, it isn't suitable that any soldier is received in the squadron without his spirit and effort considered first, as otherwise it will result in harm to one who will trust it. We have a real-life example of this in what Julius Caesar did, having to come to speak with Ariovistus, his enemy and enemy of the Roman republic, on the condition that he only came with the cavalry. So he removed the horses from the Gauls (who were the French) in whom he didn't have much confidence, and commanded them to be mounted by the best and most valiant soldiers of the tenth legion, which had his complete satisfaction, due to the long knowledge that he had of their effort and valor. In that, Titus Livius advised with great appreciation: Guard well, Captains, that you don't have in your field more strangers than your own soldiers; here he calls those that are not known strangers.

Vegetius, *De
Re Militari*

Among the Spartans, no soldier could be a mechanical craftsman.

Among the Mapuche, a soldier could not be a craftsman.

Another real-life example was given to us by Agesilaus, king and captain of Sparta, having made alliance and brotherhood of arms with other provinces close to his, in order to defeat and offend his enemies. Hearing that his companions were complaining that he always had them at war, especially because they were many, and the Spartans were few. Because of that, wanting to show them the opposite, that the Spartans were more, even though less in number, Agesilaus commanded the companions that firstly the potters and singers leave, then the smiths, cobblers, masons, and other craftsmen. In this manner, almost all the companions had parted, but none of the Spartans had parted, because those of this nation who were warriors were prohibited from exercising or learning art or occupation where one had to be seated. The king told them: "Look here, men, how many more we are than you," showing that a great number of people leaving to war isn't important, but being strong and known, and over all, very exercised. If the opinion of the philosopher Antisthenes had to be admitted, he says that it is better to fight with good, even though they are few, against many bad, than with many bad against few good. Not trusting in low men, nor mechanical artisans, nor men of little honor, but in knights and men known for virtue and effort. The Mapuche did this on their own, and with no less caution, as in the young being of age to command arms, they exercised with them, and being sufficient, they were received for war;

not being so, they were deprived of the use of them, and sent to the fields to farm, being charged with and subject to serving those who received the military art. It is very different from that which is practiced in our time, as we see that if any person will want to be a soldier, whatever type that they may be, a captain receives them under his banner, only to increase numbers. From this it happens many times, in the moment of truth (which is where the valor of each one is shown), that the captain is lost, and they were saved because the contemptible don't work to have honor, nor feel that it is an affront, nor believe fleeing is shameful. They are easily welcomed to it, as a safe port for their cowardice, leaving the poor captain on the gallows, paying the just punishment owed by the little caution that he had in seeking one who helped him with valor and effort. They are judged as incredibly lucky, in being able to bring the news of what happened. Faithfully, truly, if he would have had the custom that the Spartans had, few would flee, because among this nation, all those who fled battle were killed afterward by their captains, because among them, it was worse to flee than to die. Because of this, Erasmus said very well that it is best for the captain in war to see people come with him, and that such is what his enemy has, that he doesn't count the number, because one does not trust many soldiers, nor fear the few, because victory proceeds and is always reached by the good and not the many. This truth lets us understand, with enough approbation and disillusionment, what happened to that famous captain and leader Gideon, as going to fight against the Midianites, brought an army of thirty-two thousand soldiers.

Condition of
the low and
contemptible.

Custom
among the
Spartans with
the soldiers
who flee from
battle.

God commanded him to not bring cowardly people, and those who feared battle were allowed to return freely. This license given, and this general faction made, twenty-two thousand made use of it and returned, with only ten thousand remaining. After, he returned to command him to choose the most valiant, and dispatch the others, giving him a sufficient sign to be certain to know them, which was that he brought them to the waters, and that those who drank by hand, taking the water in it, he was to choose and take only those to battle; those that drank by sipping, he dispatched and dismissed. This diligence made, only three-hundred soldiers remained, with which he entered into battle with the opponents and defeated them. The same will happen to our captains if, in receiving or choosing soldiers, it was with the diligence of bringing them to the waters of some small danger, to prove their valor and spirit. But wonder at this consideration: if a captain, or before being one, is offered some quarrel (which I call quarrel) patrolling the street of his lady, seeks to bring friends with him, which accompany him and guard his back; for this, they are valiant, spirited, and determined, with the case not being of much importance, and I know that when they go to fight for law, king, and republic, and the rest for their reputation, that they are content in bringing one-hundred Benitillos. Although it is true that one who brings them as soldiers, whose value in that is good, deserves (serving his king and lord) all the mercy that can be given, neither priding oneself in sitting them at his table, nor giving them his side, because they don't deserve either one.

Understand that one who lacks the valor to deserve this will not have to free it from the danger and battle that will be offered to them. It will be much better to bring five-hundred honored soldiers than a great number of these Antoñuelos, so that when they will undertake some arduous and difficult enterprise and conquer it, it is a greater honor, not bringing trivial people that serve as an affront; such a captain will be so with five-hundred people as he is with two hundred. It is without such great reason that a swineherd, or others similar, are given the investment and honorable habit and name of soldier, as it properly belongs to kings and noble men. A captain will want to build a following and know the people in whom he has to trust, and the master has to teach the disciples and see if each one is suited for this science, so that one is not seen in danger, and another is not tired without advantage, nor does the disciple spend the time. They seek people with these signs, who are strong and vigorous, according to that which is affirmed by serious authors, ancient as well as modern.

THE EXTERIOR ELEMENTS

FIRSTLY, they have to have the head erect, the eyes lively and alert, the voice thick, the chest high, the shoulders wide, the arms round, the fingers strong, the abdomen lean, the thighs thick and sinewy, the legs in good proportion, the feet lean, medium stature, and the gait composed, of tempered province, hungry for honor and wealth. These elements are certain and very necessary for a person who would profess the arms, and there is no doubt in it. Although many have dealt with them, it has been all together, without giving some cause or reason, because they have to be this way and no other. Because of this, the best that I will be able, I will declare them, being helped by serious authors, whose authority is the greatest proof of it.

The head.

For the head, it suits that it is proportionate, due to being the principal member and where the senses are. It is the watchtower where one sees how they have to be governed in their movements. It has to be equal so that it communicates its virtue equally to all the other members, to each in its own way; to each member according to its role, and that this proposition declines to greater, rather than to lesser. It helps to understand well the opinion of Hippocrates, which says that a small head is bad, as well as a narrow chest. Galen affirms that a small head is a sign of poor understanding and a badly-formed brain. As such, having a well-shaped head argues for having a good brain, good understanding, and much prudence. According to the problem that Aristotle gives, asking what is the cause for man being the most prudent animal of all, one responds that because one has a smaller head with respect to the body, that one who would have a more proportionate head would be more prudent.

This is the same as the opinion of Plato: what is medium, neither large nor small, but in the means is the best, because one who would have a small head will be angry and fearful; the reason is that a small head is inflamed quickly and heats up to the point that the blood and spirit close to the heart (where anger originates) are inflamed. From this proceeds the ability to discern things certainly and clearly, and continuously doubt them. Fear proceeds from this doubt, because one cannot work their operations, which are imagining, understanding, and remembering; lacking this, one lacks confidence, and this lost, the spirit cannot remain, whose lack causes one to lose their life, or at least their honor. Plato

The hair has to be raised or curled, because according to the opinion of the authors which I follow, boldness proceeds from the hot and dry complexion, as fear is from the cold and wet complexion. Having curly hair, generally one is bold, because it proceeds, for the most part, from heat and dryness; having straight hair proceeds from coldness and wetness. Because of this, a person who has curly hair will generally be bold and choleric, and otherwise fearful and with a phlegmatic complexion. The hair.

The forehead being smooth and without wrinkles signifies a person who moves as they will and seeks questions, by being a hot and dry complexion. This heat and dryness makes the forehead hard and tight, and without wrinkles. One who will have many will be of a cold and wet complexion. Because of this, being in the mean is best, as well as in the width, which should be neither too wide nor narrow in the extreme. The forehead.

The eyebrows. The eyebrows should be neither very long nor very arched, because one who has them very long will be arrogant and shameless, because it proceeds from a great heat of complexion, from which proceeds arrogance. Thus in the length of the eyebrows and their abundance, what is said can almost always be noted and certain.

The eyes. The eyes give indication and usually show what is in the heart, as they are their windows, through which the species of things that are desired or abhorred enter. Their heat argues for the temperance of the brain and shows the accelerated or lazy impetus. Having them very lively shows having much heat, and amazingly, those who have light blue and somber eyes cease being spirited and bold; having sad eyes is a certain sign of lacking heat, which is that which makes a person spirited, bold, and determined. Because there are many differences in the eyes, each one important, we will say one point on each one of them. Thus, having very sunken, deep, or concave eyes demonstrates that a person is a traitor, because according to many authors, having deep and small eyes prevents material poverty; it also denotes being of melancholy complexion. As the effect of this is making a person melancholy and fearful at the same time, and the nature of this humor, engendered by cauterization of cholera, is making a person bad. Because of this, they say that one will be a traitor and fearful, because treason done in this profession of arms is not done, but forced by vile fear and notorious cowardice. Having bulging eyes is a sign of a person being a shameless speaker. It is the reason that, as the species of everything enters through them (as said), having wide-set eyes, they receive many types of various visible things;

as understanding is discursive singly, it does not determine all together in a short time, as apprehending one and another, and many, one cannot judge them and speak of them with good judgment. Having very large eyes is a vice and a certain sign that one will be slothful, because it signifies a teeming mass of phlegmatic material, from which proceeds a cold and wet complexion, and from this, sloth and fear. Having large pupils gives sufficient signs of a person being slothful and of little ingenuity, because of having a cold and wet complexion. One who will have very black pupils is certain to be timid, because fear proceeds from coldness of complexion, as we have said, and the black pupil signifies a cold and wet complexion. In conclusion, seeing a person that has sad eyes, without any liveliness in them, it is certain that they will not make use of the heat that gives them liveliness, promptness, and spirit. On the contrary, the best are those that are mixed black and white, because such are of good nature and temperate complexion, from which proceeds temperance of customs, and following reason in all, which will be choleric phlegmatics, who know to wait with tranquility when it suits and attack when it is necessary. The voice should be large and thick, not too much, but with some gravity, because it denotes a lively person and spirit, according to the opinion of Galen, which says that a large and somewhat rough voice indicates much heat. Aristotle is of this opinion, by which one has to avoid people who will have womanly and childish speech, which is ordinarily thin and skinny;

Understanding is discursive, and judges each thing by itself, not all together.

What sloth and fear proceed from.

A man that has sad eyes will not be valiant.

The voice.

Galen
Aristotle

Good and true
saying.

it will be seen without any doubt that they are mostly phlegmatic and of little spirit, because one who is similar to some animal in something will also be similar in complexion and participate in similar habits of such animal. It is well-known that woman is of little spirit; one who is similar to her in something will be the same. Because of this, a serious person said of our Spain: abhor the body of a healthy person that has sickly or womanly speech, and avoid a woman with manly speech, because in the one, nature worked to make a man, and for some reason a woman emerged, and the other was for a woman, and a man emerged, because ordinarily they attend to those inclinations, the one manly and the other womanly. Finally, the voice has to be a little thick, and this cannot be so except in those of great heat and strong virtue; however much more it would be, one will push more air out of the channel of the lungs, which is where the thick voice proceeds from according to Galen and other authors, who all affirm that a large voice proceeds from a great quantity of air that is moved from the lungs to the throat, which proceeds from the heat of nature, as is said. One having a large voice proceeds from great heat of the lungs and heart, from which we will come to understand that a thick voice is caused by an abundance of air, and a weak voice from the lack of it. However, one has to understand that it has to be a natural voice, not by accident or feigned, because for one who will do such to appear spirited, their spirit will truly be feigned, because the works of nature can be feigned, but not altered or contradicted. Such a feigned voice will be easy to know, and much easier in the summer, due to being the time in which the air is the thinnest, and thus the voice is thinner; in the winter it is thicker, and thus the voice thickens.

The chest should be high, understanding how important it is, as the heart (as is vulgarly said) is that which commands the body. It is certain that it does, because nothing corporeal is moved by the potency of the soul, but by the vital spirit, which has its seat in the heart. When it will be hotter, one will be found livelier, quicker, and more agile for whichever thing that will be offered to them, due to the heart being the beginning and end of natural heat, it has need of great refreshment, in order to conserve and be able to live, because life consists in it; this cannot be, unless it will be in a wide house. Because Galen says that it is so hot from its own nature, that if the animal is alive, and we placed a finger inside its cavities, it would be impossible to be able to suffer a point without being seared. Because of this, it suits that its dwelling is somewhat spacious in proportion, so that it does not suffocate, cease, and perish.

The chest

Nothing corporeal is moved by the potency of the soul.

Galen

The back has to be wide, which is commonly called stocky, so that it is equal to the chest. Thus the heart can be refreshed in suitable proportion, because if it was too wide or high in the extreme, there would not be enough heat to give to such an aimless home, which would be like a small or large oven that, with the heat, one would be searing, and the other would be lukewarm. Like such, one will not make use of the speed or the other parts that we require.

The back.

The arms.

The arms being round and well-proportioned in length is best, because it proceeds from the heat of the heart, by being very appropriate work for its lengthening and extending, and at the same time giving spirit. I say well-proportioned because if they were long, with the body being medium, it would be extreme or a vice of nature, and there wouldn't be much strength. If they were short, with the body being tall, it also wouldn't be good, because one would cease understanding, having lacked what is necessary. Being moderately rounded is good, and it will demonstrate having strength which is required for the exercise of arms. If they were very fat, they would be fleshy, floppy, and little-muscled. If they were very thin, they would not have substance or virtue; because of this, it suits that they are proportionate in all.

The fingers.

The fingers should be long, strong, and not very meaty; not so strong that being so, as well as having the strength, is the cause of much heat, as we said of the arms, and rarely a long hand has been seen on a short arm, or a short hand being on a long arm. Thus, one who will have long hands and fingers, proportionately, proceeding as it does from heat, also results in the spirit being spirited and having strength, with which fear is diminished, as Ovid said. If the hands were meaty and rough, one would have crude understanding, as will be said when we deal with the feet. If the fingers were short and meaty, they would plainly have little strength, and this has been seen many times in those that will break horseshoes. Others prove similar, having long and strong fingers, and sinewy, or at least with little meat over them.

Fear is
diminished
with strength.

A lean abdomen argues for frugality and lengthening of life, because being fat can be bad if there is much exercise. Being lean suits a man for war, as it satisfies us in knowing that the Greek captain Epaminondas dismissed a soldier from his camp only for being fat; with such impediment, one would neither be able to attack the enemy quickly, nor reach him if he fled, because with such a heavy load, the will cannot achieve what it desires with suitable speed. Having to bring the body in this exercise with such velocity to one place and another, it is plain that it suits a person to be thin and not bring with them weight that is such a burden.

The abdomen.

The thighs being thick and sinewy are very strong, by being muscular, in which ordinarily there is lightness, because with the muscles one moves more lightly, as is seen each day in those that run much, who never have thighs that are meaty, but thick and sinewy. That lightness suits a warrior for the skirmishes of attacking and retreating; being known, I leave it to your consideration.

The thighs.

The legs being in good proportion – this term of proportion, which is appreciated, has such rigor with it, that in order to make use of whichever thing perfectly, one has to lack all vice, and neither have a bad thing nor lack a good thing. In order for the leg to be so, it has to be taken well, with the shape of its calf, and the ankle tight; this is what can be called good proportion. One who will have it thus will be agile, quick in their movements. In whichever extreme that it will participate, being too thick, it will be heavy and clumsy, and their movements will be slow, and if it will be very thin, there will not be strength or vigor in them.

The legs.

That said, being in good proportion is what is required. Those that are bow-legged make use of this in particular, which generally is having them well-taken, who are commonly said to be good on horseback, and being so, it is not disliked for our exercise, rather each will be taken advantage of in the one and the other.

The feet.

The feet being lean proceeds, according to the verified opinion of those that deal with this, from the body being muscular and of temperate heat and dryness, which together with exercise does not allow creating much flesh in the feet or hands, in which there is not an abundance of blood. If they were fleshy and very thick, it would proceed from thick humors, from which thick spirits will also be engendered. The understanding of one such will be crude, aside from their clumsiness and encumbrance, they would not be able to serve the understanding and will, nor achieve one's intent with the speed that such accelerated and sudden things of war require.

Plato and
Aristotle.
The stature of
man has to be
medium.

The stature, I resolutely dare to say, has to be medium, because I follow the opinion of Plato and Aristotle in this, who say that the best stature is the medium, which is not large with excess, nor small with extreme. If one had to participate in one of these extremes, it would be less harmful to be inclined to the small, because according to the opinion of those said, much bone and flesh harm the ingenuity. Besides that, custom affirms that rarely is there science in large bodies. Conforming to the opinion of philosophers, the small man is more prudent than one very tall. Without any doubt, people of good stature bring many advantages over the rest who will participate in some extreme.

Rarely is there
science in
large bodies.

Thus Titus Livius says that the Romans were not very tall, but that they were medium, vigorous, prudent, and wise in arms.

The gait being composed can be known to be better, considering in some men how little vigor they have, that it seems that each quarter falls by its part: the feet dragging, the body hunched over because of their little vigor, the steps spacious, and with strange disgrace, which are all signs of a clumsy, lazy, phlegmatic person of little spirit. On the other hand, others move the feet with a grace and composure, that one affects: the body and face upright, without some extreme with it, the step a little accelerated, with moderation, which are all signs of a choleric and spirited person. Finally, so that there is no more than saying, nor more than wanting, it is all proportionate, without participating in any extreme that makes them ugly. Since in order for a person to be said to be perfect in nature, it is necessary, according to Tullius in book 1 of *De Officiis*,³³ and Saint Thomas in part 1 question 39 article 8,³⁴ that one is composed of all their parts and members whole and perfect and well-disposed, without there being any extreme inequality. It is also suitable (in particular for those that had to follow the militia) that they are hungry to gain honor and wealth, because with this hunger, they will undertake whichever enterprise, however arduous it may be. These were the soldiers that Cato the Younger wanted, as Plutarch refers to in the life of Marcus Marius.

If they were of temperate province, it would be better because one such would be spirited and prudent, because such province will participate in heat and make use of spirit.

The gait has to be composed.

Note

Warriors have to be of temperate province.

³³ *De Officiis*, Marcus Tullius Cicero, 44 BCE

³⁴ *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas, 1485

Aristotle
Hot lands
produce hot
things, and
cold lands
cold, and
temperate
lands cold and
hot.

Because it will have dryness, it will be prudent according to the opinion of Aristotle, who says that prudence consists of coldness, and spirit and valor of heat. He also says that hot lands produce hot things, and cold lands produce cold, and temperate lands produce cold and hot things. This is confirmed by what doctor Aben Ruiz says, that by accident, hot things originate in cold places, and cold things in hot places. When in particular the discerning master will want more and the prudent captain to know them, it will be with this consideration: a person from a cold province, being dark and hairy, will be valiant because it can be understood that they will be choleric. One that was ruddy from hot land, having a wide and tall forehead, in the manner of a lion's forehead, will also be so. Because Aristotle places many other signs in the book called Physiognomonics, the curious will see and consider them there more copiously. All of which is not so precise that it doesn't sometimes lack, but for the most part it happens in general, as the signs indicate. Although this on the provinces is more in order to know it by curiosity, than in order to intend to join many such people. This is enough to understand that while one is more proportionate, more composed, more serious, and has a better face, they will be better to deal with this *destreza*. Over all, the best sign to know them, according to Galen, is one being virtuous and of good customs, because as Plato affirms, being bad and vicious originates from one having some intemperate quality that incites them to do bad. On the other hand, good composure and temperance inclines one to do good, which is what is also required. After this science is known, as will be said in the particular advice that we will give on the reason that the *diestro* has to have in order to fight.

THE INTERIOR ELEMENTS

that the *diestro* has to have for more perfection.

BY those signs and signals that we have referred to, nature has wanted to manifest and declare, through very conjectural suspicions, the properties of men and their secret inclinations which God and nature placed in them. Not lacking consideration, because being a certain thing (as it is) that no one but God can know the intentions of people, with their interior inclinations not being placed in action nor exercise, so that one had some relief in having conjectural knowledge of that which is never dealt with nor seen. For the ministry of war, as well as for other offices, I want to place these notes and signs by which their complexion, quality, and particular inclination can be known, more or less, by the composure of the limbs. Although not for what was said, we will close the door to one that will be among a thousand, that is missing some part of those said in the exterior, and the interiors are made better, because many times nature passes from one extreme to another, without remaining in any of the means.

Signs in
Socrates
different from
the works.

Note

Placing different signs of the particular inclinations, as that worthy philosopher Socrates believed that if they had to judge him by the signs, there would be nothing good, and if they would have to look at the works, they will find nothing bad. This proposition is known, that in looking at someone, by the physiognomy of the face, one would know without error the condition of whomever, affirmed that he would have indications of a course, foolish, wanton, and drunken man, because such were the signs that were in him. The friends of Socrates, being angered, will mistreat them because of what they had said, as they so loved him, if the philosopher didn't detain them, saying: Stop, friends, so that I may let you know that truth has been said in all this, because I would have been as said, if I had not given myself willingly to philosophy, which has made me as you see me and changed me from what I had been into what I am; by means of it, I have broken with the inclinations that nature placed in me. In this, I came to understand well the power of free will, the lordship and greatness that it has to reign over bad inclinations. But, as we have said, this was an extreme of nature that will rarely be seen, because it is a very particular work, and the former is general. As we have said, the signs that one has to have in the exterior, by which we will come to know them and choose or reprove them for this ministry and exercise of arms, we come to the interior, which are of no less importance – rather of much more. Since each one of them has its own particular office in the republic of the soul, by which it is governed, some serving to advise on the present, others on the prevention of what comes, and others on the retaining of all.

These are of such importance that one who lacks any of them will not be perfect in science, because however much the soul is more excellent than the body, the interior elements are that much more excellent than the exterior. Understand that in lacking some of these exterior, the interior elements will supplement their lack, but if some of the interior will be missing, all the exterior elements together will not be able to remedy the smallest lack, as will be proven with this example. In the composure of the limbs, one has the referred parts without lacking some, and has reached in the interior elements clear understanding, acute ingenuity, and great prudence, but lacks memory, which is the bosom where the treasure of the sciences is kept, to take from there and distribute according to the necessity that will be offered. All will be lost, because the role of understanding is to see and determine the things that memory will represent to it, and prudence disposes them with diligent consideration, and exercise facilitates that which the three will command, without making any more than what it has in its charge. Lacking memory to represent, understanding will stop determining, prudence will stop disposing, and exercise will not have to be occupied in that, as none will have to do it. On the other hand, making use of all the interior elements, but lacking one such as having short arms or a narrow chest, the interior elements will supplement the lack, as it is not notable. So that you understand these elements, know that they are understanding, ingenuity, memory, prudence, and spirit.

The role of understanding, prudence, and memory.

UNDERSTANDING

and its role.

THE first and most principal element is understanding, that, as principal potency of the soul, has placed in its charge and has the role of contemplating all in the truth, as in its principal object. According to what Saint Augustine testified, the soul has three potencies: understanding, memory, and will. On understanding, he says that its role is comprehending and embracing all that which it has contemplated. On memory, he says that its role is conserving, guarding, or retaining the species of things. On will, its role is desiring and loving what understanding proposed to it. As it is the role of understanding to contemplate the truth of things, it serves us as a counselor in those that we deal with. It especially teaches us how we have to be in all things, and it is the same in this exercise of arms that we deal with, to not err in what has to be done as well as what has to be avoided. The counsel that understanding gives is of such majesty that it deserves that clarified name that various Greeks gave it in saying that it is a sacred thing, because counsel not only determines the end of things, but also the means by which the end comes. Thus Sallust³⁵ advises us that we first take counsel, and being taken, we effect it with diligence, because the things that bring gravity and danger with them are not determined easily by an unwise person.

Counsel is a
sacred thing.

35 Gaius Sallustius Crispus

This is the opinion of Titus Livius, that in the beginning of all things, it is necessary to take counsel and have audacity in working it. As the counsel that is required in the cases that are suddenly offered in the arms, one should not ask an absent friend for the present danger; understanding is what has to give it. It suits, as we have said, that one has it good; aside from that, various counsel is necessary for various events. Only understanding will be able to give them, with a quickness that only it can comprehend, because its speed is such that no other sense can reach it, as the philosopher Thales³⁶ says in being asked what thing was the swiftest. He responded that understanding, because of its nature, is so swift, quick, and acute that it took neither work to flow by the earth, nor incurred danger in passing the sea. This is seen amazingly, because in understanding discovering some difficulty or danger, it comes near to things that one intends to know or inquire, to the point that it facilitates and smooths it, and for a thousand dangers that are offered, it gives a thousand counsels with which to free us from them. Since no more true counsel can be given than one will take for themselves, and that which understanding gives, we can say in a certain form that it takes it for itself. We take it as a true friend, and one that most desires our conservation; since it has to be the counselor, in whose charge this has to be, if one had it good, it will give him good counsel, and if bad, likewise, and both are seen each day by experience. Although that said, it seems you will say to me that I clearly contradict myself in requiring understanding that is capable of giving counsel, as at the beginning I say that those that have to learn this science have to be young, and rarely does one find respect in them, as counsel is the child of long age and prudence.

Understanding is quicker than any other sense.

An objection can be placed.

Note

36 Thales of Miletus

Note

To this, I respond that although they are young, they have to seek to have the understanding of the old, and avoid the old who have the understanding of the young; many youths will be found virtuous, well-inclined, discerning, and good-natured, who have old thoughts in temperate age, looking at the end of the things, in which the beginning is placed with much consideration and prudence. The effects that make understanding active, possible, speculative, and practical is more for philosophers than for *diestros*; my intent is to deal with this material in ordinary and plain language. One who will be inclined to know it can see the book of Commander Geronimo de Carranza, where he will see this proposition and many others which could be desired.

INGENUITY

and its great importance.

IT doesn't seem to me that it will deviate from our purpose, having said that understanding, the principal potency of the soul, deals with ingenuity, and how important it is to one who wants to be a *diestro*. As it is an element that is almost no less important than the first, and in a certain manner it has a kinship with understanding, most of the time they go together. Those of the Italian nation pride themselves on this, and the rest are esteemed by having great liveliness of ingenuity. The ancient historians aggrandize and exemplify king Pyrrhus of Epirus, who had great and very acute ingenuity; being the first who taught to form camp is proof of it.

The Italian nation prides itself on much ingenuity. King Pyrrhus of Epirus had great ingenuity.

Quintilian and other authors also say that Julius Caesar had admirable ingenuity, and in our times, our unconquered lord Carlos V, emperor of Rome and king of the Spains, then Felipe II, our lord and most worthy king of the Spains and the greater part of the world, says it all, as it is well-known that his ingenuity is more than human. If he will not fall into the vice of praising his own which is praised, he would say it of his grandson Felipe III, our prince and lord, whose ingenuity surpasses his tender age with a thousand advantages, having in him all the parts that many princes have enjoyed, making him deserving of a thousand kingdoms, if one would have them as powerful as his. Many others, whom the histories are full of, aside from being learned, of great understanding, admirable prudence, and eternal memory, had excellent ingenuity in the military art, where they outdid themselves, and such famous victories were achieved, without which it would be impossible. In people, this is easy to know because, as Seneca says, since youth gives signs and signals, and although sometimes one is inclined to the bad and chooses the worst first, it has to be corrected with the bridle of reason and the reins of prudence, having put the mind on some virtue, because there it works more cautiously, and one is knowledgeable in which occupies their ingenuity. Thus, according to some learned ones that deal with this, it is necessary that one is inclined to the science or art that they will want to profess, and have known reason in all, because there is no science or art that one is placed to study that, in lacking ingenuity, they leave with it; even though they work in its precepts all their life, with all the diligence that they would place, they will be lost.

Carlos V, his son Felipe II, and his grandson Felipe III, had and have great ingenuity.

Signs of ingenuity show from youth.

Seneca.

It is necessary that ingenuity is inclined to what is learned.

Why does the *diestro* have to have a good imagination?

The universal has no need of imagination, because it is the work of understanding.

Ingenuity has to have three parts.

Law of Lycurgus that it suits the *diestro* to follow.

Another author of our time says that one who will profess the military art needs a good imagination in order to make a squadron form a camp, take *mangas*,³⁷ make skirmishes, and other things suitable for this purpose; one has to make use of good imagination to work it, according to how the time, site, or number of enemies will dispose it. It is the same for the *destreza* that we deal with, which is one-on-one combat (in the particulars), since in the universal, imagination is not necessary because it is the role of understanding, due to consisting of certain fundamentals like arithmetic, mathematics, and geometry (as we will deal with ahead). But in the particulars, as we have said, imagination is necessary to form one technique or another that is more suitable and more contrary to the complexion that the opponent participates in; thus the better imagination one will have, the better techniques they will form. Returning to ingenuity, know that it has to have three parts. The first is the facility to comprehend the precepts of this science, because in not having this disposition, it will be as Seneca says, that whatever the listener doesn't reach with their ingenuity is said in vain. The second has to be copious in fabricating many techniques, not being content with only one, nor doing it many times, because of the danger that can result, which is what I wanted to remedy. Lycurgus, lawgiver of Sparta, commanded that the captains inviolably kept to the law that none of them fought with their enemy many times;

37 (lit. "sleeves") Small squads of soldiers armed with arquebuses used to support pike squares.

the reason was so that the techniques and tricks of war with which they conquered were not learned, or they would be conquered by them. The *diestro* will have this same danger, as in doing the same technique many times, the opponent will see it and learn, and when they don't injure with it, they will at least seek some remedy, so that if the *diestro* will want to repeat it, it will have no effect. But doing many diverse techniques, the opponent will be intimidated by the variety of them, seeing that they do not take advantage of the remedy that they would have used to prevent the strike that they had seen done, because of another being done; then, they will never find a certain point in which to be able to apply some of their defense, which had been prevented. The third is faithful, because as the friend who is not so in their counsel harms rather than giving advantage, thus ingenuity which does not easily invent what suits the *diestro* will easily lose life, as has been seen many times. It also suits for it to be well-inclined, because the inclination that the youth take at the beginning will last even into old age. One who will be curious will see this by some signs (which we give ahead), and more particularly in the words that one will speak, because the habits and the secrets of the soul are uncovered. One can see that this is certain in what happened to Socrates with the son of a gentleman that was brought into his presence by command of his father, so that the ingenuity that he had could be seen. This discerning man told the young man: speak, youth, so that he sees you. This illustrates that the ingenuity of a person is not only known by their face, but also in speech and reason.

The ingenuity of the *diestro* has to be able to invent easily.

Ingenuity is uncovered by words.

The works of ingenuity are more agreeable than those of strength.

It is understood that this is important to one who would be a *diestro*, because however much the works of the soul are greater than the body, those that we do with ingenuity come to be more agreeable than those we do with strength. Not all enjoy good ingenuity, because as Saint Augustine says, being born with good ingenuity is a particular gift from God; Socrates used to say that the youth that are well-conditioned and of good ingenuity can be called children of God, because understanding is divine, and by participation, those who have this advantage can be called divine. The conclusion of this point is that in order to be a *diestro*, it is important to have good ingenuity, as well as the sense of sight, in order to determine things.

MEMORY and its importance.

Memory is the ark in which the sciences are kept.

HAVING spoken on ingenuity, a very important element for the *diestro*, know that memory, which we deal with now, is no less important for being a *diestro*, due to being the ark and deposit where the treasure of the sciences is kept; they are learned according to the definition of Saint Augustine, which has already been referred to. It is said that memory has the role of conserving what understanding does, because in not doing this, it is impossible to be able to work, nor to end up perfect. In the same way, if one earned much money and didn't keep it, they would never be rich.

Thus a *diestro*, however much that he studies and however many techniques they teach him, in not having memory to keep and in time represent them, the work that was placed will be without advantage, as Quintilian affirms that we learn and are taught in vain if we forget what we learned. He also says that the first sign of good judgment in youth is having memory. As we have said, it is good that one learns when young, which is the time in which memory is most disposed, according to the doctrine of Avicenna,³⁸ which says that the reason why the youth have great memory and remember what they saw or knew is due to having the spirit reposed and unburdened by caution. Saint Thomas gives a reason (ultimately like his) that as most of the things that children and youth see are new, they appear grand to them, due to the little experience that they have, which is the reason they easily stay in their memory. On this point, Aristotle poses a problem – what is the reason that one being old has much understanding, when a young person learns more, and more easily? The response is that the memory of the old is full of the figures seen and heard over the long discourse of their life, thus, wanting to give it more, it can't receive it because there is no free space for it to remain; but the memory of the young, as there has been little since they were born, retains whatever they are told and taught. Understanding does not consist of remembering the words that the masters ordinarily use, which they call discourse, but understanding as far as one can come to the end of theory and practice; this is the difference that Aristotle gives between the philosopher and the orator: although both studied philosophy, because the philosopher places all his study in knowing the reason and cause of whichever effect, and the orator places it in knowing the effect and no more.

One learns in vain if they forget what is learned.

Why children have great memory.

Saint Thomas

Aristotle.
Problems

The difference between the philosopher and the orator.

38 Ibn Sina, Persian polymath.

The universal
is not because
of the
particular.
Memory grows
with exercise.

In this way, the *diestro* has to seek the same, preventing the variety of strikes and the circumstances of them, and of the time, as well as the person, place, mode, material, and cause, all of which is done many times to alter the execution of the strike. In whichever state that one will be found with their opponent, if the *diestro* cannot take a formed technique from their memory, either to remove or place more or less parts of their movement, or to slow or impede the opponent's, they will fall to a thousand errors if they will only want to follow the discourse. It also suits one to know many techniques (as we have already said); before one brings to hand what would be necessary to do expressly for the case in which one will be, memory should present its treasure to understanding, so that it can choose what is best, according to the opponent's disposition, so that understanding disposes a universal proposition to the will, which follows what it needs for its conservation. For this, it is necessary to have a great memory, which keeps a great number of techniques, as the particulars enclose in themselves what we deal with now. I also tell you that it is advantageous for the universal, not because it is the cause of it, but because the *diestro* will be more agile and disposed with exercise. Aside from this, Quintilian says that memory grows with its use and exercise. Many men were endowed with this and very honored and esteemed because of it, as was Mithridates the Great³⁹ who, having an army of almost innumerable men, remembered all of their names – no less amazing than having learned twenty-two languages, speaking each one as well as his mother tongue.

39 Mithridates VI of Pontus

Appius Claudius, who intended to attain the Roman Censorship, gave as meritorious elements in order to deserve it, being able to greet all the Romans by their name. The famous Cineas, ambassador of King Pyrrhus, in going to Rome to deal with peace between him and the Romans, had a memory such that in one day, he knew almost all the Roman citizens and their names, and spoke particularly to each one. The famous Themistocles, who desired an art of being able to forget, knew so much and retained so much in memory, that in the span of one year, he learned the Persian language and spoke it with as much perfection as his own. As in our times, no more needs to be said than that of our king and lord Felipe II, whose memory is admired and astonishing. Finally, the appreciation of millions could be brought in this being said: such a powerful prince having lordship of such kingdoms and provinces, with such variety of people coming to his royal court, one had been given leave to enter his royal presence for certain business; after five years passed, going on his way, he returned to see this man, and knew and named him. It is something worthy of admiration – this man not being someone of note, nor that he had spoken to many times, but only once, and so briefly, knowing him after just that time. Memory was always so esteemed that Cicero said that it is an argument for the immortality of the soul and divinity of man. Others called it the treasure of the sciences and mother of wisdom. Finally, memory is a natural potency, conservator of the past; for example, I remember today what I saw yesterday. If you would want to know more excellencies of memory, read Cicero in his *Tusculans*,⁴⁰ Quintilian in book 11 of his *institutions*,⁴¹ and the authors that Johannes Camers cites in chapter 7 of *Solinus*.⁴²

Appius Claudius had a great memory.

Cineas, ambassador of Pyrrhus, had a great memory.

Themistocles desired an art of forgetting.

King Felipe II had a great memory.

What Cicero said about memory.

Authors that deal with memory.

40 *Tusculanae Disputationes*, Marcus Tullius Cicero, 45 BCE

41 *Institutio Oratoria*, Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, 95 CE

42 *In C. Iulii Solini Polyistora Enarrationes*, Johannes Camers, 1520

PRUDENCE

and its parts, which serves the *diestro*.

THE importance of memory to the *diestro*, which has been dealt with, is well-known, but know that its charge is no more than keeping what is learned and representing at its time (as said). But the disposition of things in such mode and time that they are advantageous is incumbent upon prudence, which, as faithful governor, distributes with much consideration the treasure that is deposited. Many philosophers speak of its nobility and quality; so honorable are the attributes that they give it that it deserves for us to desire it with all the strength of our understanding. In particular, Aristotle, in the book on ethics, defines prudence with this appreciation: prudence is a true habit with direction of the practicable things which are good and bad for man. In other parts, he says that it is a virtue of the spirit, which lets us know the bad and the good, making a representation of all for understanding. For greater appreciation, they conclude by saying that the virtue of prudence is so excellent that one who would lack it cannot have perfection, because it represses the disordered impulses, quiets the spirit, gives counsel to understanding in arduous and difficult situations, corrects the will in many things that it disorderly desires, and disposes us to work the good and avoid the contrary.

Attributes of
prudence

Aristotle,
Ethics.

It is (according to Tullius in the first De Officiis) a just act, according to the disposition of the place, time, and persons; it is the direct reason of our operations, and judges them to be just or unjust, licit or illicit, according to how it sees the necessity of the times. With it, one sees the present things and considers the past, and comparing the one to the other, comes to understand those that are to come. Thus, one easily knows the course of life and foresees the necessary things. It is the key of the five senses and is a particular virtue over the other virtues. This was well said by the philosopher Bion,⁴³ that the virtue of prudence has as much excellence over the other virtues as the sense of sight has over the other senses. This has three parts, each and every one very important to the *diestro*: memory of past things, to judge the present and future by them, intelligence to discern the true from the false, admonishing the harm that it has seen happen to others, and finally ordering all things well and governing them with reason. It takes much discernment for one to foresee that which is coming with the experience of the past, because things that do not appear good at their beginning sometimes go well, but not all have good outcomes. Thus it suits the *diestro* to always be advised with prudence in whatever thing that they would have to do, because otherwise it would be as Titus Livius says, that the adverse end of things is the master of the ignorant, and that which makes the foolish prudent. It is better to prevent the inconveniences and deceptions that the opponent can make once, rather than many times, because the prudent *diestro*, in whichever occasion that is offered, first has to prevent not only that which most ordinarily happens, but that which can happen, having it all present, considering that what is not waited for comes more often.

Tullius, 1 De
Officiis

43 Bion of Boristhenes

All that must be thought about how often it usually happens, so that when it will come, it is prevented, and nothing, however new it is, perturbs or alters him, because the remedy and counsel that one will take at the end will be fruitless, as according to some Greek authors, events are better counsel than people. We have much experience with what happens each day; we admonish that, since it is certain that the occurrence of the first warns those that come after, the *diestro* has no excuse for the slightest mistake that he makes, as however small it is, disgrace and loss of life can happen. So we have time as such a good master which, as the philosopher Thales says, is that which knows most, as it alone finds new things and renews the past. One who will deal with *destreza* learns from it, because to their dismay, one doesn't make the adversity of the ends obey the force of reason, because a *diestro* is not permitted to say: I didn't think. Finally, understand that even though the *diestro* has said elements, and more which we will say, they will be of little importance and little advantage if he would not be prudent.

PARTICULAR POINT ON SPIRIT and its importance.

OF these four elements that we have dealt with, which are those that always attend the republic of the soul, two are its principal potencies (which are understanding and memory), and ingenuity and prudence are its agents, as the effect of the one inventing and the other determining is by means of the principal cause, which is the soul.

We speak now of the spirit, which is one of the principal elements that the *diestro* must have, because just as the spirit gives life to the body, it also gives it to the determinations that one makes in their will. Just as the bridle is not only placed on the horse to repress and detain its furious movements, but spurs are also used, in this way, although the *diestro* has the bridle of prudence to restrain the accelerated determinations in the cases that suit it, it is also important to have the spurs of spirit for the occasions that one will not be able to avoid. Having presupposed that one who will profess this science has to be noble, it is known that they have to lack four things, which *Don* Antonio de Guevara says knights and nobles lack, which are vileness, malice, falsehood, and cowardice, which can never be where there is nobility. As the gentleman knows that one has to lose their life for honor, and that one doesn't die except when honor is lost; as it is lost nowhere more shamefully than fleeing, one would lose a thousand lives before turning back one foot. Those of Numantia, which today is Soria, were so spirited in war that they were never seen having turned their backs, and would rather die than think of fleeing. The Persians had this same virtue, the famous Antheus had a very great spirit, and the Carthaginian Hannibal's spirit was invincible. In all these, it came to happen that our Spanish people, as testified by the celebrated victories that they have won and win each day with valorous effort, which has been caused by the greatest spirit, which the children of our Spain learn about.

Considering that the spirit defeats all things, one can understand how necessary it is to the *diestro*, because one who is not improved by difficulty and danger is not strong or spirited. Low and ignorant men fear even where there is no danger; on the contrary, the noble is more enlivened in great danger. Not having this, one would allow whatever would happen to them, due to lack of spirit, which cannot happen to those who have it. The Spartan captain Leonidas showed this well, being on campaign with his army; one of them came to him quickly, very upset, telling him: "Leonidas, the enemies are close to us." He responded to this very courageously: "Don't be disturbed, as we are also close to them," meaning that the danger was equal for both parties. The *diestro* has to have this consideration, that if the opponent will come close to them, they are enlivened and understand that they are also close to the opponent. The virtue of spirit is nothing other than a furor that commands and governs the weapons; that furor is an ignition of the spirits that vivify the virtue of fortitude. The one who fears more in battle is in more danger, and the bold and spirited is safer. As Quintilian says, one who cowardly fears puts nothing honorable into effect. Lucius Seneca said that one who is spirited and strong is of such excellence that a city surrounded by impregnable walls could be taken more easily than a valiant heart.

Alexander the Great, son of the great Phillip of Macedonia, felt this well, hearing it said that there was a rock in India so tall and unassailable that not even birds could fly to its peak, but it had a coward in charge. He responded: Then I tell you now that it is very easy to take. Thus, although the *diestro* is at the peak of *destreza*, if they lack spirit, they will flee into the hands of death. Seneca wanted to esteem one so spirited and valiant, and said that fortune fears them, which is lord of the coward, whom fear makes a vassal, and that misfortune doesn't come to one with spirit, because it is ordinary for those who have little to flee death and follow who flees them. Because it is opportune, I will relate that which some of those who deal with *destreza* have said. Seeing this new invention exercised, as they have seen their bodies (in suitable cases) come foot to foot, what scares them most is seeing them so close, as they don't know that many times daring to die gives life. They have not heard that maxim of Seneca, that there is no danger that can be defeated without another. It seems to them that it has to be all throwing *tajos* and *reveses* from afar, seeking to prevent their opponents from coming to them. Others have taken to carrying very long swords as a remedy for this; the reason is in saying that it is best to be far from their opponent. They have seen some that profess this *destreza*, although with a shorter sword than usual, come to their opponent such that the arrogant and long sword has no way to impede it, rather, the short sword impedes it easily with its bold and superb movements. They condemn it as bad, because their spirits don't dare, nor does their understanding reach to know how it has to be worked.

Objection of
some *diestros*.

Why do some
carry long
swords?

With this, they come to believe that long swords are good and condemn the short, believing otherwise in men that, naturally, without being guided by some art or science, with great valor and spirit, fought with their enemies with such short swords that those who know less usually always made fun of them. This happened to the Spartan Agis, to whom came a man from a different nation, asking him why the swords of the Spartans were so small that, because of their shortness, jugglers would be able to swallow them whole. He responded valiantly to this, saying: know that the Spartans with such short swords reach their enemies that carry very long swords, because we reach them with spirit. It is the response of a valorous man, as it suggested that it suits one who would carry a short sword to lengthen the step toward their opponent. That which Antalcidas (also a Spartan) said was no less, in being asked the same question. He responded that they overcome even though they are so short, because we fight with our enemies hand to hand. But we don't give all the praise to strangers, as our mother Spain is not sterile in producing spirited and vigorous children. A gentleman friend of mine from Toledo carried a sword as short as any of those said, was asked why he carried one so short. The response was not only spirited, but discerning, saying: I carry it so short because when I defeat my enemy, it is a more esteemed victory, and because that which it lacks in length, I have to make up for in spirit, and the main thing is because my opponent fears me, seeing me close to them.

But that there are some who fear those who have spirit, as the son of a Spartan woman, saying to her that the sword that he had was very short. She responded valiantly: for that, Son, lengthen your step and you will reach your enemy, and thus you won't lack anything. Because our Spaniards, well-known and without any doubt, bring a thousand advantages in spirit over all the other nations, as there are none whom they haven't oppressed and subjected, have to annihilate their spirits and subject them to a vain imagination of having more faith in four fingers of sword than their spirit. But we leave this and conclude, saying that just as the body doesn't live longer than the soul is in it, any part of *destreza* will also not live longer than what the spirit will give.

THE ELEMENTS THAT THE MASTER will have to have to teach this *destreza*.

AT the beginning of this book, we suggested that in order to learn this *destreza*, it is not necessary for a master to teach it, with respect to its demonstrations, which are manifested with lines and numbers. They show the convenient place in which the *diestro* has to be positioned to give the strike, form the parry, or impede or delay the opponent's movement when he will want, whatever species that it is (not because heaven wanted to enrich your understanding with such elements, which will rarely be seen in so tender an age). Understand that all will be equal to you, because the distributor of these gifts distributes and divides them as he will, giving more or less to each one as he pleases.

We owe much
to those that
warn us about
what we err in.

Because there will be some that do not want to suffer work in inquiring the order that has to be had (although it is clear and easy), following in this the style of the princes that have *maestresalas*,⁴⁴ (whichever bird that they have to eat, they prepare and cut it, and thus disposed, place it on the table, not because the prince wouldn't know how to do it as well and better, but for greatness, as it certainly is) they want to have masters that give them *destreza* disposed and facilitated in ends; there will also be others who, reading this book and understanding almost nothing of it, want to rise up with the lordship of everything essential that will be beyond their understanding. We will place a general prevention here so that the youths (by being so) are not deceived in choosing a master suitable for a doctrine of such importance as what we deal with. When they will find one with the elements that we will place here, they know to esteem and value them. As Plato says, we owe much to those that warn us about what we err in and advise us on what we have to do. This is confirmed by the great reverence that king Alexander had for his master, the philosopher Aristotle, who said that one owes them no less than their own father, because one had received the beginning of life from their father, and a good life from their master. Since one has to appreciate being a disciple of a good master, wise and virtuous as of noble and principal parents, as truly they are. This should be sought and chosen among many, and not just whomever, but sought and examined with much care, which is of great virtue and credit.

44 A *maestresala* is a head table servant, who also functions as a taster.

Because Aristotle says that it is necessary that one who learns has to believe their master, and also that for one who teaches another, it behooves them to tell the truth. With this diligence, that which happened to a friend of mine will not happen – having learned many techniques from a master (which certain for a disciple did not have to be admitted), being offered an occasion in which to valorously place hand to sword, he wanted to do a technique which he trusted to victory, but the opposite happened, as he was badly wounded. Asking him how that had happened, he responded: I trusted my master, because with the name, he brought my credit and confidence to him, and thinking that by being a master, he could not err. This is the greatest harm of being called masters, because the name impedes them from working to know what they lack so that they truly are, being content with the name without works, even though the works without name is better. This is very contrary to the desire that the philosopher Socrates must have known, as it was usually said that he taught others for ten *doblas* or *libras*,⁴⁵ but that if he had some that he taught what they lacked, they would give ten thousand, such was their greed of knowing.

The disciple is obligated to believe their master.

Folly of a master.

The master should be wise in the *destreza* of arms, knowing the parts that each strike has. This is not by chance, but with much certainty, because one cannot be said to know what the cause is for some disgrace or death, as has happened to many masters that have invented some harmful and very dangerous techniques. God willing, what they invented with malice, they knew before others by the experience of losing their life. It is a just punishment of heaven that whoever invents something to harm their neighbor suffers it first, because one who plots with malice and seeks the death of their neighbor finds his own by the same path.

The master has to be wise.

⁴⁵ units of money

This happened to Perillos, who gave Phalaris the tyrant that bronze bull, invented by that demonic ingenuity only to torment people with a new type of torture. Righteous heaven permitted that by command of the king, he was the first that experienced and died in it. Here is fulfilled that which the wise said, that one who searches out bad things will be oppressed by them. The same happened to Cleisthenes, who was the first in Athens to invent ostracism; he was the first that the Athenians ostracized.

It also suits one to be wise and relaxed, of mature understanding, acute ingenuity, and enough experience, spending some time in the study of this science. It is very convenient that the master begins to work before teaching, as working well, one will teach well, and otherwise for the opposite, as it is certain that we are as obligated to imitate what they do as to learn what they say. That which happened to that youth that Plato taught makes this certain; as the time of vacations came and he went to his father's house, one day he saw him laughing too much, and told him: Son, you have not acted rightly, because I have never seen your master do such a thing.

The master has
to be spirited.

Example that
the eagle gives
to its offspring.

It suits one to be spirited and vigorous, because it will be bad to teach one to attack when their spirit is inclined to retreat. But their disciples would amazingly stop being so if one would be spirited, as one will do with them what nature says that the eagle, queen of all birds, does when its offspring are old enough to fly and sustain themselves, because it takes them from the nest and catches any other small bird or animal, and tears it apart in front of them to teach them how they to hunt.

The masters have to do this in front of their disciples, exercising the *destreza* that they will teach, so that in seeing it, they imitate it. If they had the nature of a rabbit, when it takes its offspring to the field, not only does it not teach them to attack nor hunt, but it teaches them the most secret paths by which they have to flee. Whichever of these things that the master does, their disciples will imitate, because human hearts are more persuaded with the works that they see than with the words that they hear, not because the master can give spirit to anyone, but with the science that they will teach, and with the example that they will give, they can make some daring who were not before. These are the elements that a discerning person has to search for in a master that gives enough satisfaction in the science that they will profess that one knows it with certainty, because one is not satisfied by the maxim of Terence,⁴⁶ which says that the fortunate or unfortunate events are the true masters that make the foolish prudent. But if one will be found perfect, and the reasons that they will give will leave the understanding satisfied, then be obedient to their precepts. As Aristotle said to a doctor, coming to visit for a grave illness that he suffered, who ordered him to do certain things with his authority without giving him reason; because it was not founded in reason, he told him: don't think that you have to heal me like a cowherd or miner, rather, you have to teach me the cause and reason of what you order, and thus you will find me obedient. The discerning person has to do the same when their master will give them some lesson or technique, asking the provable cause and reasons for it.

That which the rabbit does with its offspring.

Hearts are moved more with works than with words.

What happened to Aristotle with a doctor.

46 Publius Terentius Afer, Roman African playwright.

What the
Indians do
with their
diviners.

The liar cannot
be accepted by
noble people.

Aristotle

Praiseworthy
custom of the
Mapuche.

The meaning
of “fencing”
and “fencer.”

Not giving them, one does with them what the Indians do with their diviners, whom they had as philosophers and believed what they said; if some time they were not right, the penalty was already established that they were silenced forever, and that if some spoke, they were not believed – a very just sentence, because the liar cannot be accepted by noble people, who always deal with the truth. In this, it seems that they found success with that saying of Aristotle, asking him what liars gained from lying, he responded that they are not believed when they will tell the truth. Although heathens, they give themselves a notable advantage in a praiseworthy custom, and in particular in choosing masters, or permitting them in the republics, having made an ordinance that no artisan left their trade and took another, nor that a man of war became a laborer, nor an artisan a philosopher, but that each one made use of what they knew. This is very different from what is permitted today in the Spains, and especially the matter that we deal with, as any mechanical artisan whose understanding doesn't reach to the least important of their trade, leaves it and takes to being a fencer, becoming a master of fencing [*esgrima*]. It is a very appropriate name for what they teach, because the name *grima* is the same (in our Castilian) as a thing that brings fear and danger, and they say very well it is *grima* [*es grima*], and they are masters of *grima*, which is the same as fear. As such, there is much distinction between a master of arms and a master of fencing, because the former is one who teaches the causes and effects that are produced by the arms scientifically with provable reasons, and this is the good that we have to esteem, and the latter is a master of fencing, which is the same as saying a master that teaches a fearful thing.

Thus, noble and discerning people should have to know and learn such a thing, like a discerning gentleman that, having called on a master of fencing to teach him, considering that in little more than the two hours that he was teaching him, the lessons began with the sword, continued with the dagger, small and large buckler, shield, *montante*,⁴⁷ axe, mace, pike, and halberd – and the worst was telling him that he was already a *diestro*. Seeing the notable lack in both the master and what he taught, the prudent gentleman took the fee from his desk that would have been enough for much time of good and certain *destreza*, and gave it to him, saying: Take this, master, and note that I don't give this to you for what you have to teach me, nor for what you have taught me, but because you have uncovered to me the little certainty that there is in fencing, and the folly on which it is founded; neither do I pay you for having come to my house, but so that you will not come back. The discerning have to do this, believing it better to pay them so that they don't teach them, than after having deceived them, since we see clearly that those that are bad masters kill more with their doctrine than a great plague. It had the result from here that the republics placed great caution in examining the masters that have to teach their children and give them a particular salary so that they taught them with love, not consenting that it was done in any other manner. Then such masters would seek to know more than what they know, study more than what they study, and presume less than what they presume, and the good will be esteemed as such, and in that which it deserves.

Note that is admirable.

That which suits the republics to do with the masters of arms.

47 A two-handed sword up to six feet in length.

Why the emperor Honorius banished the fencers.

One who will teach the art of war has to have exercised it for a long time.

This cannot be today, due to the barbarism that there is, and wanting that one who knows least is esteemed like one who has worked more, because the *destreza* itself is good, but those that profess it either don't understand it or don't want to teach it. But it is compassion that in a republic, until the crier seeks the best, and the master of their children many times is the worst. Surely, if they were in time of the Roman emperor Honorius, he would banish them like the gladiators of that time, because those he banished were killed like beasts in the festivals that they had; many of them would deserve the same, because as they are not killed (because they are kept well), they are the reason others are killed, by trusting in their words. Each one being in their trade, each one does what they know, exercising what they learned, as it is a great ignorance (as Socrates says) to want to rule over others when one can't rule over themselves. They hear that saying of Plutarch which says that the art of war is taught by one who had used it many times, because one cannot teach another to be skilled when they themselves are not. As it is certain that it is difficult to learn from many what is in few, it is just that good republics have caution that each one makes use of their trade. In this, they will serve God and King, in seeking that the masters of arms are as we have said, so that when they will have deserved soldiers (which is necessary each day it is offered, with respect to the continuous wars and many enemies that our mother Spain has made), one finds them so skilled that confidence can be had in victory. Aside from that, in the hand of other artisans, only wealth is lost, but in that of the masters of arms, wealth and life.

Because the bad master robs wealth and affronts the person, in the occasion so that one learns, they either end up dead or wounded, due to what they teach being false. Thus the *destreza* that is in the hands of a serious, prudent, wise, and experienced master is praiseworthy, as with the science one will know, and with prudence and wisdom one will choose what suits, and with experience one will know how to apply it. But the presumption of some masters has come to such, and the consideration of the disciples so little, that all that which the former say, the latter believe without consideration; that which the masters invent by night, they believe by day, as if it were verified with infallible truth. I only fear that having such noble disciples of good understanding, there is no one on hand so they know the error they make, the danger in which they put themselves, and the disastrous end that many have had by having followed the same that they follow. It amazes me that there are none of the other vulgars that fears, because the vulgar is so frivolous of theirs that they are pleased with the novelty, even though it is uncertain and harmful; they truly love new inventions – the stranger the thing is that they are told, the more they love it. It is a shame that they don't know their own harm, that one believing all that they hear, and doing all that they see, it happens with little judgment and a frivolous heart. Being persuaded by whichever word and saying of whichever person shows that one is of little understanding. It is the maxim of Erasmus that one who will easily believe another cannot be prudent. I say that when the master will give some lesson, that the disciple examines and experiences it, to see if it (in the necessary occasions for which it is learned) can be trusted, and not taking it without thought (as they say) without wanting to examine the parts it has, from which principles it proceeds, and what ends can be expected.

What a bad master does.

Such is the vulgar.

The ordinary
destreza was
not as bad as it
is today.

It is a great frivolity to easily believe what cannot be proven by reason, and that which is founded in none. Look at whether they give something that leaves understanding satisfied and the spirit quiet; to a person of reason, reasons convince them. In this manner, and with this diligence, one has to receive whatever lesson, as believing it without them is an unjust faith, credit badly employed, undue confidence, and danger as certain as it is doubtful. It is a grave shame to see how many masters rose with *destreza*, which is a certain sign that it is lost. According to Plato, there is no greater indication of a republic being lost than when many heads rise in it, and because of this, *destreza* that has been practiced up to now has been lost. Although it was not as bad as it is today, the republic of true *destreza* will also be lost if noble people of good understanding do not favor it and free it from the hands of those that we have said. To those to whom it will appear that I am harsh in reprehending, forgive me, as it is certain that the vices that they have in public cannot be removed with flattery or secret words – public vices, public reprehension. What I say suits them, as the good or bad that they will do will give them advantage or harm them. I dare to say and certify that the punishment has to come as quickly as they will commit the mistake. Time has given me its word to be my surety, making me a true and certain prognosticator. Much was offered to me to say, but my intent is not to disgust anyone, rather to persuade all, not telling them a thing that weighs on them, but warning them of things that advantage them.

THE ELEMENTS THAT THE DISCIPLE

who would want to be taught this *destreza* has to have, and the master is given the order of how to teach and at what time.

WE have told the disciple what master they have to choose, and the elements with which one has to seek them, and the qualities that they have to have, so that one will not be deceived. It is just that we tell the master what disciples

they have to receive, how one has to know them, and how one has to teach them. It will not be reasonable, being as we have said, that one spends their time teaching disciples whose inclinations and spirits do not equal nor conform to what they want to profess; just as not all people can be masters, neither can all be disciples. Aside from which, good, noble, and well-inclined disciples deserve good, wise, and experienced masters. We see that this is reasonable in whom the most celebrated men that there have been in letters have had as their disciples. We will see that the worthy philosopher Aristotle had Alexander, and was as appreciated in being his disciple, as Aristotle was in being his master. The celebrated Seneca had as his disciple the emperor Nero, Policrato had Emperor Trajan, the philosopher Chilon had Leandro, our lord and Roman emperor Carlos V was a disciple of Adrian, who was later Pope Adrian VI, and his son and our lord Felipe II, king of the Spains, had as his master Siliceo, who was later Archbishop of Toledo – all men so wise that when some will be found such, they are not better.

Celebrated
masters and
illustrious
disciples.

Letter from
Alexander to
his master
Aristotle.

When one would have notice and knowledge of the science of arms, and there would be men so esteemed in it, those in letters will also call them to service. Thus, disciples so serious, so powerful, and so illustrious were suited for masters so wise, so prudent, and so excellent in letters. This is the prize of those that spend their life, however long it is, working to come to the greatest perfection that their understandings can reach; princes honor them, by being served by them. Aside from which, they are important, as however greater the power they would have, the greater the masters they have to seek, because just as they give advantage to all their vassals in riches and power and the rest, they also have to bring advantage in knowing. Alexander said this well, knowing that his master Aristotle had published certain books on natural philosophy that he had heard of, in a letter that he wrote to him that contained these words: Certainly Aristotle, you have done bad in publishing the philosophy books that you wrote, and I heard of, because how do you believe that I will exceed other men if what you taught me begins to be common to all? This weighs on me, because I would have you know that in science and doctrine, I want to have advantage in all, not in riches and power. With this, the master would understand the diligence that one had placed in seeking disciples, as when they are not as excellent as those said, at least they are with the elements to which we will refer.

On the contrary, besides tiring oneself without effect, one would not lack blame for the bad that they would do and the least defect that they had, because people always attribute the imperfections of disciples to their masters. That which happened to Diogenes with a youth shows that this is true; seeing him dishonest and ill-bred, he went to his master and struck him with the staff that he always carried, saying: Take that, because you taught him to be this way. The philosopher Plutarch wrote to Trajan, his disciple, that all the harm, mistakes, and defects of the disciples fall on the masters, which permits them little rest. There are doubtful ends in their disciples, because there are some whose ingenuity is such that study is not enough to wake them, and in such occasion, the parents lose the cost, the master loses the work, and the disciple loses the time, and over all, the reputation of the poor master is almost lost. From this, one comes to understand that the state of the disciple is more secure than their master's; just as the soldier's is more secure than the captain's; it has been seen many times that even though one is a valorous warrior, and with his sword in battle opens a path in the enemy's chest with valor and vigor, if victory is lost (or not reached) due to the cowardice of their soldiers, the blame is placed on the poor captain. On the contrary, if victory is achieved even though the captain doesn't have the elements that are required for such office, but for the valor and vigor of the soldiers, the glory of the conquest is attributed to him, and it is never said that soldiers won said battle, but Captain So-and-so defeated said enemy, conquered said force, broke said army;

People attribute the imperfections of disciples to their masters.

The state of the disciple is more secure than that of the master, and that of the soldier more than that of the captain.

The captains
had to seek
with caution
that there were
good masters
of arms.

it is ordinary to attribute adverse or prosperous occurrences to the leaders. Since the histories are full of this, we come to our purpose, in which I say that the good or bad that a disciple will do has to be attributed to the honor or guilt of their master; it is also ordinary for a wise man, in whatever faculty, to say he had a good master. As we have given an almost infallible rule to the captains to know the soldiers that they have to choose, and the military art and teaching the exercising of arms are the same, such that those that had sought most that the republics had masters with said elements, they had to be the captains themselves, as these teach in their homes and in peace what one has to do when they will be with the captains in war. If they will be good masters, they will teach well, in the time of necessity (which is where they are necessary) it will not weigh on them to find them skilled and spirited, since, as we have said, science increased the spirit. Thus, the master can also take this rule, in what touches the exterior elements and signs for the limbs and proportion of them; being good for one, they would be so for another, as both things depend on each other and are causes for the same effect. I will advise them also for the interior, as they will know them, and we will give some documents on how they have to be with them, which will be of no little importance.

The first thing
that the master
has to know in
the disciple.

The first diligence that the master has to do with the disciple is to know if they are noble and known in virtue, because nobility and virtue are always inclined to good.

In general, the noble are always of generous spirit, not subject to any passion, nor given to vainglory, nor arrogant presumption. There is nothing that obligates one more in war than being of good blood, because such make use of those five particular gifts that *Don Antonio de Guevara* says, which are: spirit to not flee, generosity in giving, credibility in speaking, heart for daring, and clemency for forgiving. One who will teach a proud disciple will not achieve their intent, because pride is the enemy of ingenuity and a companion of little spirit. Just as the swelling of the eyes harms vision, swelling of spirit harms ingenuity.

That which obligates one most in war.

Pride is the enemy of ingenuity.

The discerning master also sees that the disciples that will be chosen are favored by the particular gifts that we have said before, which are understanding, ingenuity, memory, prudence, and spirit. It will easily be seen if one will have understanding in comprehending quickly what they are taught, because one who will teach a dull disciple will till in dry ground and work in vain. If one will have spirit in the determination with which they work, there is no greater pleasure for one who teaches than seeing their disciples skilled in what they are taught. On the contrary, just as it weighs on the painter to see their painting marred, which they painted with great artifice and in which they placed the strengths of their ingenuity. Thus it weighs on the master to see their disciple marred, whom they taught with great industry and work, in which their doctrine is so badly employed. The disciple is also obligated to work on their part to come out perfect, because no one can be a *diestro* through the work of only the master.

The second thing that the master has to consider in the disciple.

There is no greater pleasure for a master than seeing their disciples skilled.

Aristotle, how
the disciples
will take
advantage.

This is what Aristotle responded with, being asked how it could be that the disciples took advantage in much, saying: Those that remain behind work to reach those ahead, and those ahead aren't careless. With this, it is clearly seen that the disciple is obligated to work on their part, and the master will not be deceived in the choice of disciples. It only remains to know how one has to be with them, so that their work is advantageous.

The third thing
that the master
has to consider
in the disciple
is age.

The master, having known those disposed to profess the arms by the signs that we give, has to consider their age, that they are neither young nor too old, as both are impossibilities – the former because their limbs have not reached the strength that is required, and the latter having lost it. It seems to me the youngest should be eighteen years, which is the age in which they toughen up and gain strength to be able to handle arms, but have the capacity to receive and comprehend what they will be taught. There are many of this age that, in body as well as understanding, don't have the disposition for something of such study and work. The other age is twenty-five years, which is the time when understanding is disposed and the limbs are more apt and robust for the continuous exercise that is required. This will rarely be found in those that pass this age, as such movements and actions will not be so easy or agile, and their understanding will be occupied with caution, which will be an impediment to them. Some that will pass from the age that we say will have other elements that will cover and supplement if there will be some lack.

It remains to the disposition and judgment of the discerning master, because a certain rule cannot be given on age, as some people of fifteen years are enough, and others of twenty are young, others of forty are old, and others of fifty have the disposition of thirty. Thus, Aristotle says in the first of Ethics that people are said to be old and young according to age, customs, and works, and Pliny in book 11 chapter 37 says that one of twenty-one years is already robust, and their nature has already come to perfection. With that said, we don't want to persuade you that one who will be forty or more will not be able to learn part of *destreza*, which is enough to be defended. In this occasion, the master will be able to take advantage of teaching them some strikes that are called second intention, which many times are not necessary to be done with quick movements, and many times it happens that without any of its part preceding, the intent to wound the opponent is achieved. When one will not want to wound or kill (because *destreza* doesn't obligate it), they will be able to impede the opponent's movements with some *atajos* (which we will declare ahead), but will not make use of that speed that the young will, due to said causes, and because the strengths have already faded, and the heat is not such.

When are people old? Aristotle, Ethics. Pliny, book 11.

In beginning to teach them, I am of the opinion that they are exercised first, if they otherwise would not be, in running, jumping, bar throwing,⁴⁸ playing ball, playing an instrument and dancing.

What the master has to exercise their disciples in.

48 A children's game

The ball game consists of the same violent and natural movements as the arms.

Carranza, folio 148.

Idem, fol. 151.

The exercise of running makes one agile, thin, and healthy, and jumping in a certain manner, but because one has to lift the whole body and suspend it in the air for this exercise without resting on the feet, which one who runs doesn't do, both help. Bar throwing creates strength in the arm in order to handle the sword. Playing ball is important to know the movements, because the ball game is composed of violent and natural movement, where it is necessary to know the nature of each one. Sometimes one waits for the voyage that it makes to end, by virtue of the strength that is communicated in that distance that there is from the bounce to the place where the defenders are, which is where the natural movement begins and is generated, although many times it is resisted before the one ends or the other begins. Having knowledge of this, one will take advantage of knowing the movements in the arms, since they are composed of the same, and many times it will suit them to comport oneself with them as with the ball, some waiting for the natural movement, and others at the beginning of the violent, and some without the one ending or the other beginning. Playing an instrument and dancing is so that one knows the consonance and gives the steps in their point, that the body, arm, and strike, not each thing by itself, but all together, make a true consonance of music; here is where *destreza* is equal to it, as Geronimo de Carranza says. For this, it would be good that the disciple makes use of some shoes that have lead between the two soles, walking with them for some days, until the point that one has to exercise the arms or dance; having walked with that weight, when one will remove it, they will be found so agile that the movements that they will do will be almost incomprehensible.

It has been ordinary for masters up to now, in some parts, to give lessons to their disciples at night. Although I have sought to know the origin of this custom, I have not been able to find it. It has just been an introduction already received, which our master shouldn't use, rather doing the opposite by teaching in the morning. That this is better and more advantageous, I place by the author Aristotle, as he says that memory is easier in the morning than the evening, because the sleep of the past night has moistened and fortified the brain. As memory is a part of wetness, and sleep brings this, the morning is when it is more disposed to receive, rather than at night, when the vigil of all the day has dried and hardened it.

At what time the disciples have to be given lessons.

Aristotle, that memory is more disposed in the morning than at night.

Aside from what has been said, it is necessary for the master, in order to be certain, to know which complexion the disciple participates most in, so that one is not deceived in giving to one what the spirit of another requires. To one who would be choleric, whose spirit is to attack due to the participation it has in the element of fire, one should teach doctrine that is equal to this spirit, which are strikes of first intention (which will be given in the discourse of this book). The sanguine, due to the participation in the element of air and heat of the blood that particularly predominates, also have their determinations and attacks,⁴⁹ and it will suit to teach them how they have to attack. The phlegmatic, due to participating in the element of water, which is heavy, will not be accelerated in their movements, but inclined to wound without much diligence on their part; they will have to be taught phlegmatic strikes, which are of second intention.

The fourth and most important thing that the master has to know in the disciple.

49 *acometimientos*

Carranza, folio
177.

The master
notes and
does.

Seneca, that
which is
learned in a
long time is
slowly
forgotten.

To the melancholy, due to participating in earth, aside from being slothful and slow in their movements, most of the time they are fainthearted and ruled by fear, (so that they lose it) one must teach them to only defend, impeding and placing *atajo* on whichever strike that the opponent will form, whichever species it is, with which one will not see the lack that they naturally have. Geronimo de Carranza says to this effect that the disciple has to tell the truth to their master like a confessor, showing whether they have spirit or not. But being required a thing that they will never accomplish, none will understand that they have this lack; when they do understand it, they will not say it due to their honor, because the presumption has this seriousness with oneself. When they will not say it, one will be able to know them as we will advise ahead in the particular point that we make in knowing the complexions. One will be able to see the signs that each person has, so they will not be deceived in knowing their spirit and inclination, so that as one could, they come out perfect and don't lack on their part. But one must take note that the lesson that will be given is with language that conforms to the capacity in which they will learn. Not being content with saying it only once, but many times, because this will result in making clear what was obscure, dividing it into parts and declaring it with examples, because that which is divided into parts makes for easier understanding. The disciple that will comprehend it in this way will never forget it; the saying of Seneca testifies well to this, that what is well-learned over much time is slowly forgotten. Over all, one teaches them the true cause of what they will be told, as then a thing will be known well when its cause will be known.

With this, the disciples will be skilled in a short time, being able to employ well what they will spend in such noble exercise. The master will be content in seeing that the work that had been suffered in teaching them is the reason for working with certainty, as there is nowhere that the knowledge of the learned master shines more than in their disciples coming out skilled.

JUDGMENT OF THE TWO *DESTREZAS*, true and false.

IT is a celebrated maxim of Aristotle that it is not enough to tell the truth, but that it suits to prove the cause of its opposite, so that it can be known better, because bad being close to good makes it seem better. It is well-founded in reason that in all conclusions and disputes, the first to be dealt with is to define the subject being spoken of, so that there is no error, as well as for excellence of the same, because the definition of the argument is the beginning of knowing the thing being argued. Just as two contrary things oppose each other, but are manifested and declared (because in having notice of a contrary, one comes to knowledge of the other), in order to know which is the true and the false *destreza*, it is also necessary to counterpose the one with the other. With this, we will come to know what the fundamentals and reasons are, because it appears to me that it will not be enough to persuade them to leave the false *destreza* that they have dealt with up to now and exercise the true confidently, even though the opinion that the philosopher Antisthenes gives is well known;

All that which
is done is in
one of three
manners.
The defense of
animals is by
nature.

The defense of
the common
destreza is by
chance.

he says that the most perfect doctrine that one can learn is to forget what is known if it is not certain and true, but the principal causes on which each one is founded are declared and manifest. This will result in a clear notice and certain knowledge of the certainty of the one and the falsehood of the other, and at the same time love and desire of the one, and hate and abhorrence of the other. For this persuasion, two things usually have great strength, which are reason and authority. Because reason has its foundation and root in natural light, and authority in prudence, we will have to make use of these. Plato says that all that which is done is in one of three manners: either by nature, by chance, or by art. For our purpose, we place three types of defense in these three. We say that which irrational animals have in themselves is by nature, and they are defended from their opponents by means of that natural instinct and the knowledge that it gave them. Having provided arms to each one according to what suited them, when they see that their opponents want to injure them, they naturally defend themselves and make use of them. Although they have no rational knowledge in order to know when and from whom they have to be defended, they have natural and sensible knowledge for it. That which is done by chance is what sometimes has effect and others not. Sometimes it seems infallible, and more often it lacks, as when one does something (as they say) without thought or haphazardly, if it will come out well. But also, by not knowing the means by which they have to reach the end that they seek, nor the fundamentals on which they have to be founded for such work, they begin it uncertainly and confusingly, without other knowledge, being founded in vulgar opinion.

This is a dark and doubtful knowledge of the thing that is practiced, and an estimation and doubtful knowledge of those that don't have certain and clear notice, which can more justly be called vulgar error than opinion. There is a difference between this and reason, as opinion not verified or founded in certainty always goes far from the truth, and reason always follows it as its true end. It proceeds from this that all that which is founded in such opinion sometimes succeeds and other times lacks, which we can justly call arbitrary luck, because what perhaps comes to its effect cannot be called art or science, nor can one expect certainty when each one makes a law of their will and desire without following more order or reason than their own whim. The truth of this is seen each day in the masters of fencing, who are not scientific and invent new techniques and lessons, leaving the past as something already old, as if they were shoes that are broken or a cloak that is frayed. They are very content with their new inventions, saying that they know modern techniques, which are newly used, as if the composure of one's limbs and their movements are different from the past. They don't see, and don't want to see and be certain, that the variety of times and customs don't change, and cannot change, the certainty of the sciences; rather, they measure and subject the rest equally. Aside from that, good and artful things always appear new to us, and this reason was enough that Aristotle wondered and said that when something is done or happens whose occurrence is by chance, it is shocking or miraculous.

The difference between opinion and reason.

Aristotle says the thing that happens by chance is shocking.

When speaking only to our purpose, it was a very well-known reason, because the techniques that are most commonly used by those who deal with the ordinary *destreza*, even those in which they trust more, when they want to make use of them, they work with some people and not others, on one day and not another, with various luck and not on one's own. Since the causes are uncertain, the effects that proceed from them have to be uncertain, because from uncertain cause, one cannot expect certain and infallible effect (because there is none).

The defense
that is done by
art.

The truth is in
all its parts.

That which is done by art is with scientific fundamentals, from which proceed infallible effects, because if there really is truth in something once, it will have it many times, even though it is in diverse manners, because the truth is in all its parts. Take arithmetic for example: we say that three times eight is twenty-four, and we will see then that four times six will be the same, and six times four, the same, and eight times three will also be twenty-four. However many times that we will balance the numbers proportionately for said sum, it will not lack; we will come to take the truth of the sum clearly, without lacking, because it is an art founded on certain principles. In this way, if a *diestro* of true *destreza* did a technique of second intention (which is by means of the opponent's movement), as we say: his opponent formed or wanted to give the most rigorous *revés* in the head that one can consider, whose proper and common place is executing it on the right side, not depriving the *diestro* of being able to guide it where they will want, as we say in another part, dealing with it in its proper place.

In order to be defended from said *revés* without parrying, with only the strike that one will give serving as a parry, it is necessary to give a curved step⁵⁰ on the left-hand side of the circumference and form another *revés* and offend them with it. As Carranza says, a formed technique⁵¹ is when the opponent does a technique of *revés*, and another is taken from the same *revés* with which they will wound them, it would be free and found certain in the effect. But if one wanted to wound with a thrust below the sword arm, giving the same step while the violent movement is formed, one would find the same certainty and defense. If one wanted, when the natural movement had lowered, to give the same step and wound straight in the chest, they will find effect and defense without any fault. If one wanted, also when the natural movement lowered, to put in the left foot, profiling the body, to wound with a thrust in the chest above the opponent's sword, one would offend without being in danger. At the beginning of the remiss movement, before the violent is generated, if one wanted to wound with a thrust in the chest, they could. At the beginning of the violent movement, before the natural is generated, if one wanted to form a *tajo*, their intent would succeed. According to our author, *tajo* is formed against *revés*, and *revés* against *tajo*, and offending with it, one would remain without danger. Finally, however many times one will do, by means of said step, whichever of these strikes, they will find certainty due to the inequality that there is in the steps and lines; the opposite will never happen, nor could it lack. The reason those who deal with the false *destreza* lack this certainty is because they want to live by vulgar and false imitation of what they see, going behind the countenance of the people, not behind the science and fundamentals on which it is founded.

Carranza,
declaration,
folio 2.

50 *compás curvo*

51 *treta formada*

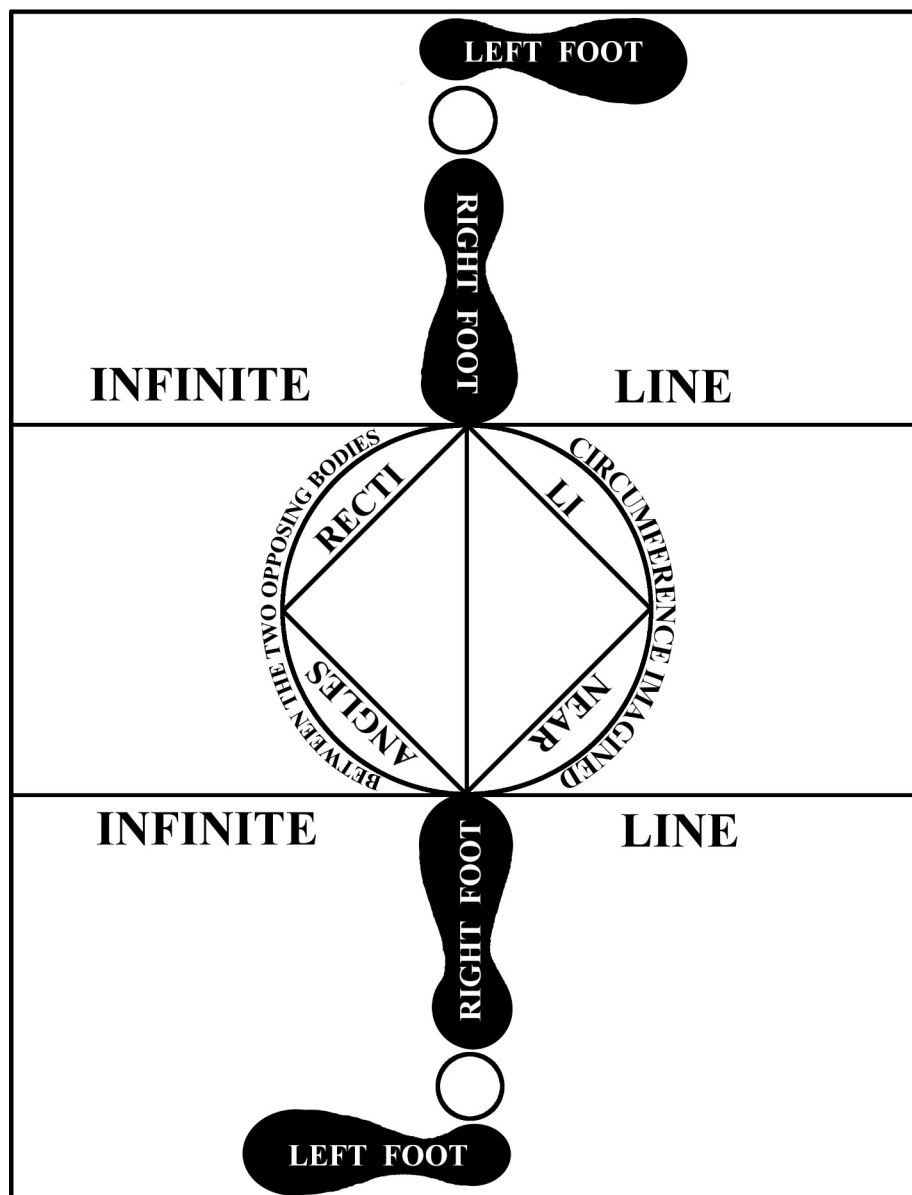
This work is
divided into
five parts.

For this, Seneca says that in living according to the people, one lives basely and faintly. As they have occupied their understanding with this base opinion, they don't understand whether what they know is bad or good, and the things that they profess and know are not only bad, but the bad that comes from it is much worse, as is seen at times. Finally, with all this that we persuade them, and with the long experience they have of it, there have to be many that, being disillusioned of this vulgar opinion and falsehood, don't have to give space for the truth to disillusion them. Since we have argued to this point and concluded with reasons certain enough to conquer your will and whichever others that will not have prevaricated it, we come to the use of *destreza*, dividing this work into five parts, as we said and placed at the beginning of this book, beginning with the particular fundamentals and precepts that you have to keep to in order to work it better, placed in demonstrations.

SECOND PART,
WHICH PLACES THE FUNDAMENTALS
of the true *destreza* in demonstration and particular
precepts that one who will want to be a *diestro* has to
keep to.

WITHOUT WHICH IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE
to know or understand it, or even have safety of your
person.

With a warning of particular things that serve as prevention for
what lies ahead.



THE wise craftsman that takes charge of making some edifice, so that it is perfect, firm, and durable, places utmost care in taking the foundations of the depth and bowels of the earth. With utmost diligence, with ruler and other instruments, they seek to make them straight and not inclined to any side.

Thus, for this edifice of *destreza*, the wall and fortification of the defense of a person, it is necessary that when one will exercise it, the principal foundation of the feet is perfect, so that it doesn't lack because of it. For this, you have to take note that the *destreza* doesn't obligate anyone to make impertinent extremes with the feet, such as inconsiderately parting one leg from the other so that there is a great distance from one foot to the other. Many have been given to (and even erred in) this, appearing to them that by opening the legs and extending the body, they reach more with the sword; in this, they are knowingly deceived, as we will say ahead in its place. The harm or danger that can happen will be considered in this form: being in this extreme with the legs disproportionately open, if your opponent wanted to form a straight strike of thrust, or circular strike of *tajo*, to which it was necessary to delay that movement or wound them at the beginning of it, having to make use of one of the angles (that will also be declared in their place) that they are, having to be with an almost incomprehensible speed, you will not be able to do it. This is because if you have to progress⁵² forward, or as is commonly said, give a step, you necessarily have to bring in the left foot, which will be parted from the right, so that it supports your body, in order to be able to lift the right. As Aristotle says, any movement, by man as well as irrational animal, consists of rest and work in this manner: so that the right foot can be lifted high, the left has to be stopped, on which the body is supported, and vice versa.

Aristotle.
Walking and
running
consists of rest
and work.

We commonly see in walking that when the foot is lifted, it is because the other is already set down and supporting the body on itself, which is what the other had done, and no other way. It will be the same if it would be necessary to regress⁵³ backward; it would be necessary to lift the right foot and bring it close to the left, which is parted, before it can be lifted. The reason why people have not been given to this is because they have not seen this manner of walking, and what they have used is that, being positioned⁵⁴ (even in said extreme), if it is necessary for them to regress a step, they do no more than taking the right foot back, the left foot remaining ahead. If they want to progress forward, they put in the left foot, leaving the right behind, which is seen in the entries that they make of the steps; how harmful this is will be said later. Returning to our purpose, being in this extreme, the movement that you will make will be so slow and spacious that it harms you by being in said posture. Geronimo de Carranza, in the declaration of his book, calls this a tiresome posture, by participating in that extreme, and not having any that is not harmful, except those that the *diestro* makes in the cases that are offered, which serve to injure the opponent and be defended from them, as you will see in the discourse of this book. In resolution, know that the best posture, and where the body is most rested and disposed to come to any movement, is having the feet close in good proportion, with the right placed ahead, pointed straight to the opponent's body, and the left close to it, not straight like the first, but across such that one heel comes to be in front of the other, parted the full length of an ordinary span⁵⁵ of a person, no more, no less.

Carranza,
folio 2.

⁵³ *desgraduar*

⁵⁴ *afirmado*

⁵⁵ *geme* – the length between the tips of the outstretched thumb and index finger, about half a foot

The *diestro*
takes note of
what is
important.

Simile against
those that
establish
themselves
with the feet
open.

If the feet were together, it would be perpendicular, and one would be able to make you fall to the floor with little strength, which you will be able to experience. In our posture, the body is rested, which is what our author calls the posture of proportion, because the body is over both feet equally, as shown in our demonstration, which you have to understand in this manner. The small circle that is between the right and left feet is the distance of a span that one has to have from one to the other, as we said. The larger circle that is between the right foot of one and the right of the other is the distance from one opponent to the other. It is an infallible rule, which never has any exception, that in *destreza*, at any time, for any strike, in any state and point that you will be found, it has to be with this same proportion of feet. Any time this will be lacking, it will be very harmful to you; the same has to be understood when the left foot will be put in, because then it will serve as the right, and the right as the left, and these will be exchanged, but with the same proportion. It will be of little importance that one is positioned with their sword, making whichever diligence to wound or be defended, if the principal fundamentals, which are the feet, are disproportionately open, as all have them. This is similar to the statue of Nebuchadnezzar, having a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, abdomen and thighs of bronze, legs of iron with the feet partially clay,⁵⁶ or how other edifices of great stones, whose height is great, with the foundation made of adobe and clay, are fragile.

In this manner, although you have a head of gold in knowing many strikes or techniques, and chest and arms of silver in spirit and strength, and abdomen and thighs of bronze in strength of limbs, and legs of iron in the suffering, if you have feet of partial clay, fragile from some extreme of what has been said, you will neither reach victory nor go without danger, because the slowness in such cases brings that with it. We will be able to bring many examples that the posture that we said is the most certain and advantageous, but you can be satisfied with a few. Since I remit experience to you as a good master, it will remove the doubts you will have. Consider when you are in a circle of conversation, how you have your feet or how the others have theirs, and you will find them without any care, placed as the demonstration shows, not with the legs open like a bridge. Also consider when one wants to run, whether they have the legs open and the feet disproportionate, and you will see that they have them together. For proof, place yourself in the extreme that I say, the legs open, and you will see that the little that you are in such extreme you will not be able to suffer it, and you could be in the posture that I say all day. We also see that one who runs, jumps, throws the bar, plays ball, dances, flees, attacks, stands, or walks all have their feet proportionately open, without much danger; one who exercises the arms has them so open, which is the cause of their death. As these examples are certain, I don't want to bring others that I could, but since we deal with this material, we will remove an error that some have given by saying that the left foot can be put in at any time, as they are accustomed to in the entrances and passes that they do. Putting in the left foot and then the right is more impertinence than advantage, as is said, which will harm one who does it without time and in important cases, because when the *diestro* puts in the left foot, it is more to injure than to be defended or play, as Carranza says in the third dialog.

Examples for those that establish themselves with the feet disproportionately open.

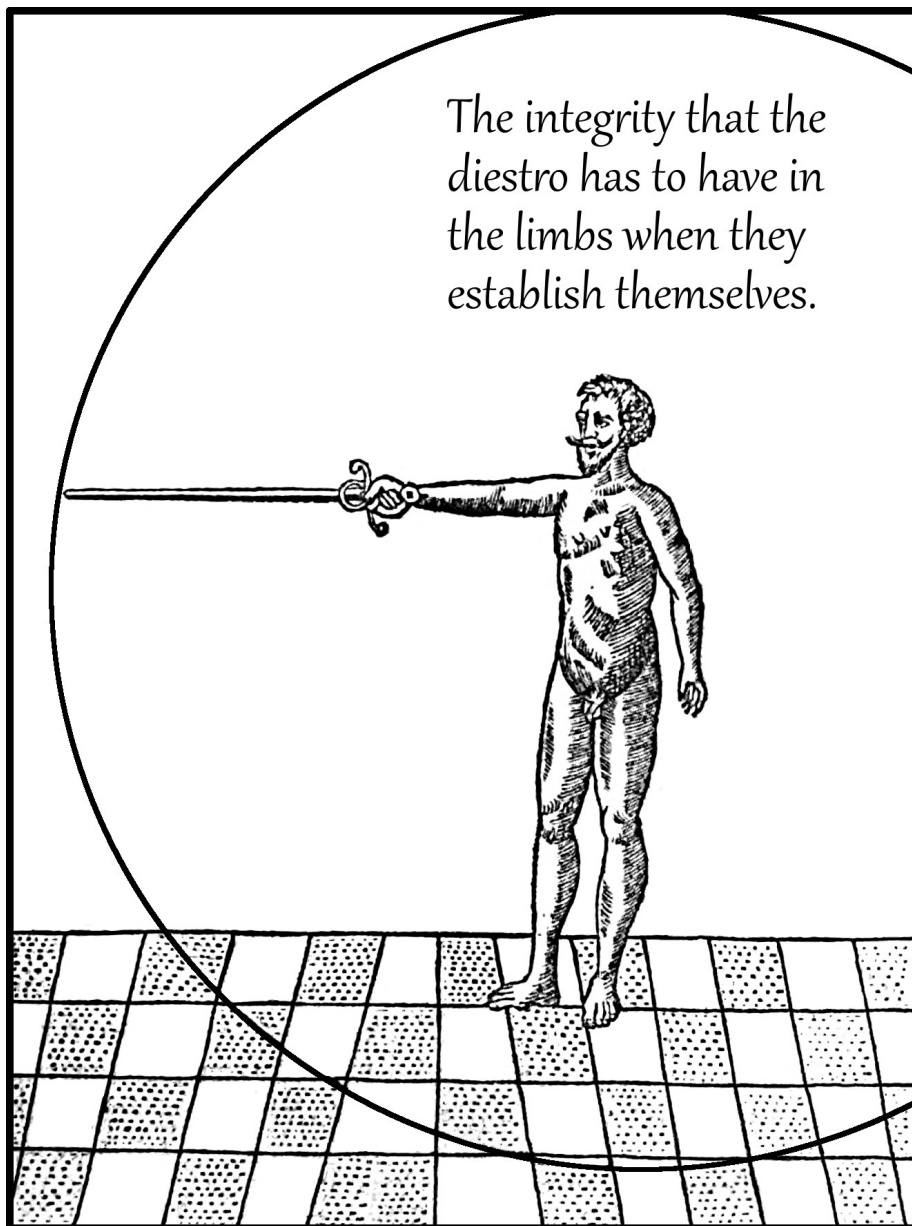
Carranza, fol.
165

Aristotle.

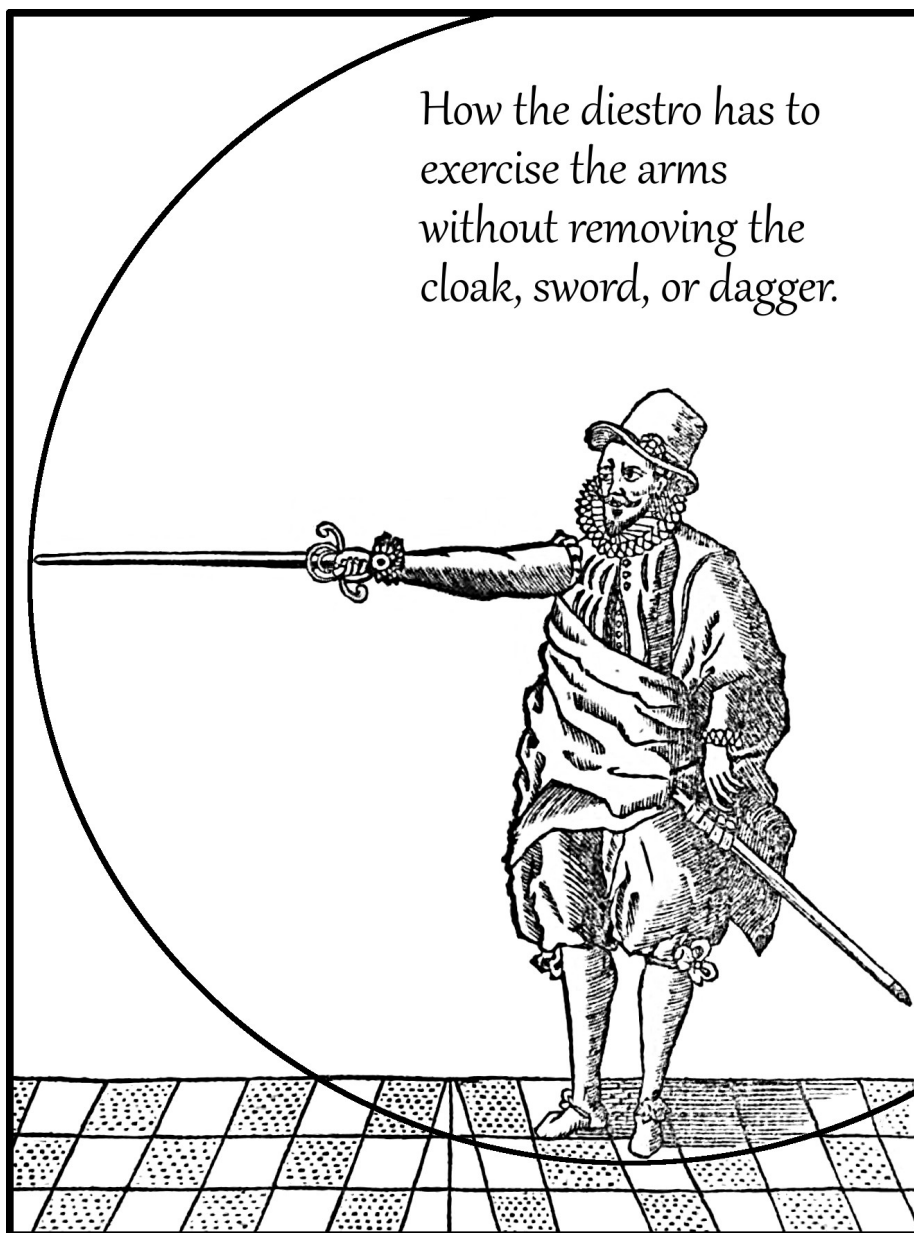
The movement
of any animal
begins on the
right side.

However, this is by means of some of their and their opponent's movements, or by means of having the sword subjected, as you will know ahead. But to those who say that it is advantageous to put in the left foot, we have to be convinced by the authority of Aristotle, that the movement of a person, or any animal, begins and has its origin on the right side, and that is the first that is moved in all. There are also many examples of this in one who runs, as we said, and in one who walks, who always begin with the right foot, because this movement is natural in all. We conclude that just as the right foot is what we move first to go forward, it has to be the left to go backward, without forcing anyone to do the opposite. Just as progressing forward with the right, the left then has to follow, being placed in the same proportion, when it will be necessary for the left to regress backward, the right follows, being placed close to it, as seen in the demonstration. The definition of this point has to be that going forward, the right takes charge and the left follows, only being placed close to it, but going backward, the left is the one that governs and begins the movement, and the right then accompanies it, being placed close to it, as said. This is such that, farther from or closer to the opponent, the right always has to be ahead, except in the cases that are to wound with the left, which then it serves as the right, as is said. The rest that lacks close to the body will be seen in the following demonstration.

The integrity that the
diestro has to have in
the limbs when they
establish themselves.



How the diestro has to
exercise the arms
without removing the
cloak, sword, or dagger.



PLINY, in his natural history, considering on one hand the baseness and rusticity of irrational animals, and the greatness of understanding being denied them, esteems them little, and on the other admires and is amazed in seeing the infinite nature with which they search for their advantage, flee from their harm, and seek their conservation. Placing the consideration in man, to whom a part of the celestial treasure was given, enriching the soul with three very fine stones, which are the potencies that produce and engender free will, these had to bring well-known advantages to the other animals. Seeing that in many things it is the opposite, he reprehends it, saying that there had to be great confusion and shame in seeing that another animal knows what is harmful or advantageous to it, and one just ignores it, which results in their harm. In this he is knowingly right; it can be neither denied nor contradicted for many reasons, and in particular in the matter that we deal with, the proof of it will be enough. Aristotle, in the second on the elements of animals, says that among all those, only man walks upright and erect, because their nature and substance are divine and celestial, which suited them more than any other animal. Aristotle proved it in his seventh book of Physics, saying that man is a lesser world in comparison to this great world, that contains all things in itself. Because of this, man is lord of all animals, which obey and are subject; thus it was convenient that a more perfect thing, as man is, was given a more perfect figure and movement of it, which is done high, where perfection is.

Pliny, Natural History.

Aristotle, 2, on the elements of animals.

Why man walks erect, and no other animal does.

Aristotle, Physics, book 7.

The harmful
extremes that
those who deal
with the false
destreza put
themselves in.

Because a figure suitable for their movement is appropriated to each thing, a diametrical figure counterposed upright over the feet is particularly suited for the things that have two feet, which are foundations of the whole body, like the foundations of houses and edifices. Although other serious authors give reasons that affirm and accredit this, it is enough to give this charge to the professor of arms, as one will not easily leave from it. When some disciple will give their part, at one point we will catch them red-handed, as is seen when they are exercised with the sword, as they inconsiderately discompose their body, being placed in a thousand very harmful extremes, whether leaning over the left foot, or over the right, or bringing the feet so close together that one is placed over the other, without ever having rest or repose, perverting in all the natural order of movements. However ugly and harmful it is, it is necessary that we look to the examples, because of them being many and having great strength to bring a person to good or bad. There are none that doubt it, and many times even the easiest and most homey have the most strength to persuade, because understanding receives them better. We will consider whether one (healthy in their limbs) of good disposition of body, and gallant, walking around, stopped going like other people, the body erect, moving foot and hand with gallantry and moderated acceleration, bearing oneself as ordinary among the gallant. Instead they wanted to go waddling club-footed like a hunchback, or with the body so inclined that the face was close to the floor, or the opposite, or taking a step so long that it was laborious or sometimes even impossible to return to join the feet to give another step.

As we have said in another part, in the opinion of Aristotle, the movement of walking consists of rest and work; what would be said of that? It seems to me that there would be no one who wouldn't laugh and make jokes. If an edifice, after the careful and diligent craftsman had worked straight in all perfection, was crooked or twisted, at that point we would say that it would want to fall and wouldn't last. Nature formed man so perfect in all its limbs, with such concert and odd composure that understanding cannot consider it perfectly, and the most outstanding admires and is amazed. So if one does not esteem it and falls to some of the referred vices, we will be able to say that it doesn't deserve the possible disgrace that can come to it, or the danger that could be imagined to harm it. With the desire that reason obligates me to ensure that you are free from all those, I decided to place this demonstration here, for this principal cause as well as to advise the advantage that results in having the body erect, so that its profile is good (which is one of the fundamentals of greatest consideration in *destreza*). The arm also has to be straight, and advantages result from it, for one's own defense as well as offending the opponent, and being able to attend to their movements with less work and more freely. It better conserves breath, from whose conservation not only proceeds victory, but the conservation of life, whose importance is left to consider (which we will deal with in particular in a preparation that has to be done to enter into the universal).

Very important
part to reach
victory.

Three
advantages
that result
from having
the arm
straight.

On the way, it manifests how the sword has to be taken, and why it has to be gripped in the hand, and the advantage that comes from it, and those that result in having the arm straight, which are three, all very important: reaching more to the opponent, having more strength in it, and the last, being free from a strike that they give to the elbow in the false *destreza*. They seek this with as much truth and diligence as one that they usually give to the foot, but that of the elbow they celebrate as an artful and secret strike. They find themselves content and victorious when they have reached the end of their pretension (which is giving it in the elbow). However, the one and the other and all the rest will cease without them achieving their intent, by only keeping in all to the straightness and integrity that the demonstration and figure of the man shows.

Carranza, f.
166.

Carranza, f.
166.

As important as it is to have the body proportionately erect, not many appreciations are needed, nor is there much difficulty in understanding it. In the first demonstration of the feet, what we deal with would be enough, but you have to take note that not only do the feet have to be proportionately together as we have referred, but it is required that the body also makes use of such proportion. In this, one complies with what our author calls moderate angle, which is being over both feet equally, because this is the best. If it was in the extreme of the feet together, we have already said that it would be perpendicular, which is the same that Carranza called being in line, because in the posture of the feet together, the whole body makes a straight perpendicular line from the head to the feet.

It will not be steady, due to lacking the moderate angle of the legs, as according to our author, such angle is where strength is, by having that proportionate distance from one foot to the other, which is where a person can better and more promptly reach their opponent. Being in this way will end the enigma that Geronimo de Carranza places to mathematicians, saying how can it be, given two lines, one greater than the other, that without increasing the quantity of the lesser, it is made to reach more than the greater (without diminishing its length). This is done with only the one who has the greater line positioning themselves in the extreme of the feet disproportionately open, and the one with the short positioned in moderate angle with the feet proportionately together. If both were positioned the same way, either in equal proportion or in equal extreme, the greater line would reach more. When they were equal, the reach would be equal, because as we have said, one equal to another cannot have power, and thus the shorter reaches more than the longer, due to the latter being positioned with it in some of the extremes, and the one with the shorter being positioned erect.

Solution to the enigma that Carranza posed to the mathematicians, fol. 166.

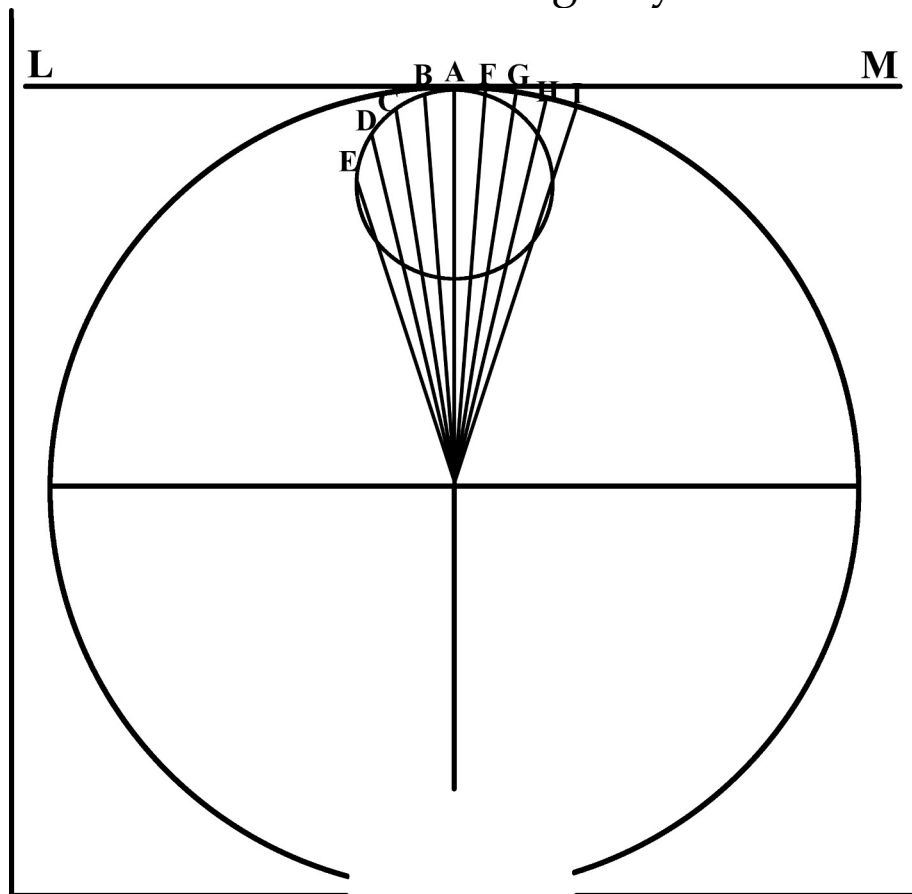
You also have to take note that aside from having the body erect, as is said, it is very important that it is profiled, such that the chest is not directly to the opponent's sword. Besides not having the promptness to impede the movements that the opponent will make, one will be reached less with the sword (as will be proven by demonstration). As such, the conclusion is that in order for the body to be in good profile, whether it is considered with sword or without, it has to be sideways, as manifest in the demonstration.

The profile that the body has to have in order to be good.

Carranza, f. 2,
in the
declaration.

Whether the steps are on either side of the circumference, or on the line of the diameter, or on whichever of the collaterals, which are the lines that form angles, always keep to this precept, because going against it would be done with notable harm. When it would be important to make use of the step of the left foot, as we said in the demonstration of the feet, it serves as the right. Since it has to be ahead and the right behind, one has to keep the same exactness that the left side is profiled and the chest is never straight to the opponent, except in some propositions or techniques that go above the sword, putting in the left foot; in such case there is no place to be completely profiled. But it has to be understood that this has to be worked by means of having the sword subjected, and in no other manner, since our author says that the profile touches the figure of the body, without the sword being able to work. He also says that the profile is the good or bad figure of a body, so that we come to verify with certainty how a person profiled reaches more than another who is not. Believing that it would be convenient to convince any understanding, I wanted to place it and prove it by demonstration, so that you understand it with less work, and in one point you know the good or bad profile that your opponent will have, and you know how to gain the degrees of it, as such an important thing. At the same time, I wanted to warn about some extremes (as bad as they are harmful) in which the professors of the false *destreza* place themselves, with the desire that all consider it, some leave the bad, all generally know the good, and you and they take advantage, since this is knowingly my desire. All will be able to be considered in the two following demonstrations.

Line of contingency



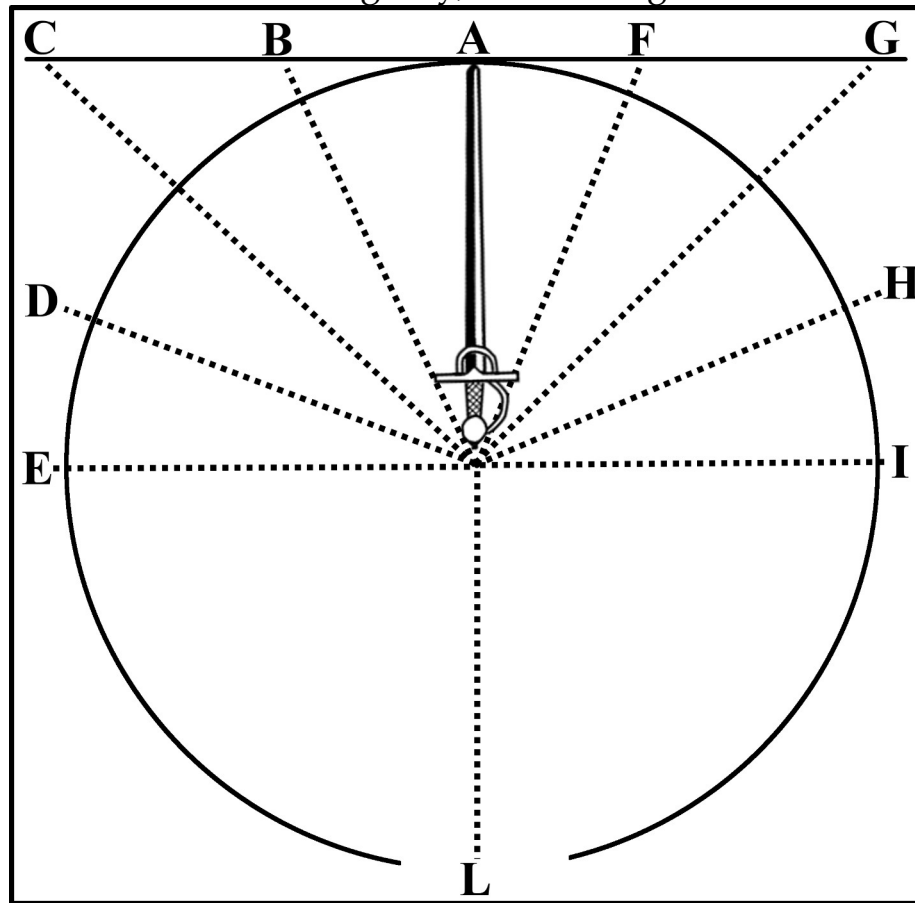
Demonstration
to know in
which posture
one reaches
more.

EUCLID says that if a point is taken outside of a circle, which we call D, and straight lines were drawn from it to the circle, one of them will pass through the center of the circle, and others in whichever manner that they are. Of those that will fall on the concave circumference (which is the line that forms the circle, which we call circumference), the greatest of them will be the one that will pass through the center (which we call the diameter), which is where the sword is, and the others closest to it, as seen in the line to point A being the greatest.

Euclid, book 3,
theorem 10,
proposition 11.

This is due to said reason of passing through the center, coming to the line of touching, or contingency, which is line LM. Dealing with the left side, we will see that the line to point B is greater than what point C shows, and lesser than the first. The line to point C is greater than the line to point D and lesser than the second. The line to point E is least of all, as seen in the separation that each one has from the line of contingency. But if we now wanted to supplement each of these four lines and add what it lacks in order to reach the line of contingency, which is the touching of all, like the line to point A reaches. We will see that the line that point F shows, which is what was equal to point B, comes to be greater than the diameter, for all that distance that there is from the concave circumference of the greater circle to the line of contingency. Successively, the line to point G, which was less than point F, to which we add, comes to be greater than not it, since as is seen, there is more distance to the line of touching. In the same manner, the line to point H is greater than what G shows, and the I greater than the H. Thus, what is usually greater will come to be lesser, and the lesser greater. From this, one comes to infer and make clear that for all the lines except point A (which is that of the diameter), if we want them to reach the line of contingency, it has to be by adding to them the lack that each one has. The solution of this point will be declared in the following demonstration.

Line of contingency, or touching. *Euclid.*



Demonstration
in order to
know in what
posture one
reaches more.

WE accredit this demonstration with what is presupposed in the demonstration before this, and what we demonstrated, that the right angle reaches more than any other, and we will have no doubt of its certainty. But for the comprehension of what we deal with, you have to suppose that a person, aside from being spherical as we have said, will also be considered in two lines. The one from the head to the feet is called perpendicular according to Euclid, or vertical according to astronomers. Another is considered in having the arms open, from the one to the other, which we call line of contingency, or touching, according to Euclid, or horizontal to the first (which is from the head to the feet) according to astronomers.

In the demonstration, we already spoke of the judgment made of the three angles and which reached more. We will only deal with the one considered from one arm to the other, passing through the chest, by being more to the purpose that we deal with. For testimony, these two demonstrations and their arguments were brought, only for those who can or do understand Euclid. For the rest, the application is what pertains to them, and even that which gives them greater pleasure, by being for those of more facility.

The line from point A to point L, where the sword is, is the perpendicular, and the line from point C to point G is that made by the open arms. If lines are drawn from one point, that which will pass on the diameter is known to reach farthest. Now it has to be understood that, positioned upright with the body profiled, which is how we have said and demonstrated, placed sideways, and the arm with the sword on edge,⁵⁷ one will reach to point A, which is the opponent's chest. If one wanted to reach to point B, which will be close to the origin of the right arm (which is the shoulder), not making a movement of the feet, it will lack all that there is from the circumference to the line where they go to touch. If they wanted to reach to point C, which will be the joint of the elbow, they will fail to reach by all that which the demonstration shows. If they came to point D, which will be the hilt of the sword, they will not be able to reach it, nor even with another such length of the sword. If one will be positioned in point E, they will come to be in the parallel line, equidistant, as C E shows, whose nature is that in proceeding infinitely, they never meet.

⁵⁷ *de filo*

The same can be considered in the other lines on the right side, from which we come to make it clear that just as in lowering from the chest to the acute angle or rising to the obtuse angle, the sword is parted from the center, which is where it reached on the line of the diameter, and is placed in a part where it is impossible to reach, that also parting it to the right or left side will stop it from reaching, according to what the lines that leave from the center show. Now you have to consider that it seems that they do it intentionally maliciously, or from crass ignorance, as in the case of parting from the central line (which is where the sword is, as said) and removing the arm from its place, putting it in one of the extremes of nails-down or nails-up, is bad and dangerous. They would neither study another thing nor do it, as ordinarily seen in having left said line that passes through the center without dealing with it, as if the act of truth was a bad and harmful thing. They position in the line of point B, nails-down, arm bent, all in angles, which they say is their technique of the occasion that they give to the opponent. I certainly believe it, because one that does so gives a very suitable occasion to be killed, because parting the sword from the line or point of touching (which is the chest) and curving the arm, it is so, except bringing it to a place that would reach less even if they had the arm straight, as the demonstration shows. On the contrary, the other sword will reach more, and with little diligence, one will be able to wound those who position themselves in this way, as will be given in its place.

Note.

Note.

What the vulgar call occasion.

What
technique is
done in point
C.

There are others that position themselves such that they come to point C with their sword, nails-up, as we have said, and there they do a technique whose name is inviting,⁵⁸ making a gentle movement, nails-up, uncovering the chest, so that their opponent is inclined to wound them in it. At this point they part the sword more and give space so that the opponent can injure them with a small movement, as we will advise ahead.

The technique
that is done in
point D.

Others discompose themselves with more liberty, throwing a *tajo*, not very long, bringing the sword to their left side, with the greatest caution and prevention. When the opponent wants to wound them in the chest (which they could, having convenient means, as their sword comes to point D), they catch it making a cross, putting in the foot, giving a very strong thrust. Their oversight of such is known, and the danger is certain. If you will always have caution in choosing the mean of proportion, when the opponent will want to make such movement, you will wound them due to the long voyage that their sword has to make in making the *tajo*, which is composed of remiss movement with participation of the acute angle, as well as the brief path that yours will have to travel, since it has to be an accidental movement⁵⁹ by the right angle, and his sword reaching so little, as the line to point D shows. You will wound them by making use of the circumference on your left-hand side at the point that they make the remiss movement. However, if they returned to catch your sword, it will be necessary to free it below, making use of the other side of the circumference and wounding, as will all be advised in its place.

Note.

⁵⁸ *llamar*

⁵⁹ *movimiento accidental*

Inconsiderately, without any reason or prudence, other times they throw a *tajo* which they call ripping,⁶⁰ applying such force that they bring the sword to point E. For this, the arm crosses the chest, with the same intent as in the half *tajo*,⁶¹ of returning to catch the sword, and coming to such point, it will be in the equidistant parallel line, as has been said and seen. With this, having the sword so remote, and the voyage that it has to make to return to the right angle that it left being so long, and you being positioned straight and having chosen said mean of proportion, and the movement being so brief, to which we have already referred, one can consider how easily they will be injured, even before the remiss movement finishes, by only using a little of the circumference on your left-hand side. If they will return to catch your sword, which is the intent with which they throw the *tajo*, considering that theirs comes to the obtuse angle, you will pass with a curved step on the other side of the circumference, freeing the sword below, wounding in the chest, as we have advised in the point before this, and we will demonstrate ahead.

The technique that is done in point E.

Discussing the other four lines on the right side, even though for declaration of the profiles and reach it will not be necessary to declare them, as they are similar to the first, by declaring the technique that is done in each one, some of them will be told, as it is not long-winded to always say what is suitable. For the first, point F is a technique that is done by bending the arm so that the quillons of the sword come to be in front of the shoulder, uncovering the chest a little, which they call inviting⁶² the opponent to wound in the uncovered chest.

The technique that is done in point F.

60 *rompido*

61 *medio tajo*

62 *convidar*

I decline this reason or invitation, but the cost of the invitation will be at their expense, if you had chosen the mean of proportion, as with it, aside from reaching more, the movement will be brief; passing a little to the circumference on your right-hand side, you will wound in the chest. When they want to catch your sword in their quillons (which is that they intend), the strike will have already arrived, and you will be able to return to the mean of proportion, where you will have safety and liberty to return to wound.

The line to point G, and the technique that is done in it.

The line to point G is so frequented by them that they almost believe it to be the end of their defense, and many times when they take the sword, they do nothing else. In it, they make one of the most memorable techniques which is also called inviting, like that of point C, as both movements are the same size (each on its side). In this, they uncover the chest, so that one would wound them in it, with the intent to beat the sword and give a *tajo* in the head. They don't look at whether the movement that they have to make to achieve their intent is lengthy or brief. If the opponent's is quicker, they will be able to wound, like you will wound them, having chosen the mean of proportion at the point that they would open themselves or uncover their chest, by only giving a step on the circumference to your right-hand side. With this, you will gain the degrees of the profile, which is enough to be able to wound them with your sword, without theirs being able to reach unless they give another step to reposition; at the beginning of that, one will also be able to wound them.

The technique that is done in point H.

They form the *revés* in the line to point H when they finish the *tajo* that we advised in the line to point E, with the same intent to beat it to give a *tajo*, with said prevention of the mean of proportion.

Consider that aside from having the sword so remote, as the demonstration shows, they form said *revés* with participation of the acute angle, against which the right will reach more, and you will be able to wound them. If it would be brief, make a little use of the circumference on your right-hand side, so that the sword remains remote on your left side; we will advise the rest that is lacking in its place.

If they came to point I, although not usually, sometimes they place themselves in it, uncovering the whole chest. They would come to be in parallel lines, without hoping to be able to wound from there, because of it being impossible. If one who would do such has some notion of being defended, they are disillusioned, because it will be impossible if the *diestro* will have chosen the mean of proportion already referred to, because with it, one will be able to wound them with a movement so brief that it will be almost incomprehensible. If sight makes them doubt that they can comprehend it much, they will doubt much more that they can prevent it with the remedy, as in reality they are so far, however close they desire to be. But, you have to consider the demonstration and figure of this person, which is on the rectitude and integrity of the arm, to be a new thing; the language and doctrine is rarely seen, and when seen, it is not kept, which must be due to ignoring the advantages that result from it. There are two that both enclose the desire of man, which is to injure the opponent and remain without injury. Having the arm straight, one can attend to the opponent's movements, impeding the thrusts and wounding at the same time, and the *tajos* along with the *reveses* and *mandobles*,⁶³ defeating them without parry, wounding sometimes at the beginning of the violent movement, and others at the end of the natural. In this, the feet will supplement what will be missing in order to be reduced to proportion, with steps on the sides of the circumference, as will be manifested in the demonstrations ahead.

Point I

The advantages that result from having the arm straight.

⁶³ Cuts delivered by moving only the wrist.

Why the strike
is given in the
elbow.

Aristotle.

Remedy
against the
strike to the
elbow.

How the
sword has to
be taken.

Carranza, fol.
178.

We come now to declare a strike that they seek to give in the elbow, as we promised to manifest its remedy, and the reason why they do and can give it there to each other. It is that they position themselves curved, bending the arm at the elbow, and the sword necessarily has to rise to the obtuse angle; in this, they find the elbow uncovered and like to wound in it. There have been some so skilled in this strike that sometimes they have disabled the opponent's arm. But as the philosopher says, ceasing the cause ceases the effect, and as positioning oneself in right angle extends the arm, without making any angle or bend in the elbow, they will not find a place to wound. Of course when it is straight and they seek it, or will seek to give it, it is and will be to their detriment. As they make a half circular movement and incline the body in order to reach, and the right angle reaches more, as we have proven, then without the *diestro* making any diligence, they are wounded with as much rigor as they place in wounding. With this, in order to be defended and wound them, no more is necessary than being positioned in right angle.

Now it remains to advise the manner of taking the sword; even though it seems that you will know it due to the common use there is in taking it, when the reasons that I will give are heard, it will be possible for you to be found so deceived that you consider reading them time well spent. Although for this I could remit to you the book of our author, as in the dialog of the philosophy, it teaches by demonstration how it has to be taken, I want to take on the work of translating it, adding something more for its declaration.⁶⁴

64 Pacheco did indeed publish an abridged version, in the book *Compendio de la filosofía y destreza de las armas de Geronimo de Carranza*, in 1612.

The ordinary and common way of taking the sword has been placing the finger that we call thumb (which is the first on the hand) on the *recazo*⁶⁵ of the sword. This oversight has many times enabled it to be knocked out of the hand, due to being in a bad posture as well as the manner of taking it. To avoid prolixity, we will only advise what is best, without dealing with the rest, as the one will manifest all. The demonstration of the man demonstrates this well, which appears to have the sword in this way: the index finger, which is second on the hand, has gripped the hilt by the junction that its arms make, and the thumb above all four, closing and gripping the hand with all the virtue that the tendons, muscles, and sinews have. Placing the thumb above the other four is of no little consideration, as our author proves very elegantly that it alone has as much strength as the other four. This being proven, seeing that when we want to make force with the hand, pulling or gripping anything, then we come with the thumb to favor the other four, because we feel them weaken easily. Also, when one makes a wager that their hand cannot be opened, it's not with the thumb lifted, but with it gripping the others, as the key and lock of all of them. Finally, every time one wants to make force with the hand, the thumb is what strengthens it, gathering the rest below itself as support for all, as everyone will be able to consider in their own hand. Many times it has been seen in taking the sword as it is vulgarly taken, and in it being subjected, communicating some force, the four fingers alone are not able to resist it, nor having the sword and then coming with the thumb to favor them.

Carranza, fol. 155.

Why the hand has to grip with the thumb.

⁶⁵ The unsharpened part of the blade near the hilt.

Note.	Since you trust in me, and I in Geronimo de Carranza, and he in long and certain experience, believe that it is the best, strongest, and most secure manner, so that it is not knocked out of your hand, as well as to be able to better attend to the opponent's movements. Those that you will decide to do are the quickest, because however much more the sword will be gripped in the hand, the virtue of strength will be communicated more forcefully, with which you will better be able to defend yourself.
The advantage that results from gripping the sword in the hand.	Aside from this, a point of great importance for your defense results from here, which will be that touch is more certain and known. It is a precept so important that by being such, a particular manifestation of it will be done, by means of which, you will be able to be defended and to injure. The last and most
The advantage that results from having the body erect.	important advantage that proceeds from having the body as we advised is the conservation of breath, which is known, and reason manifests it, as it is of such importance to all people, in particular to those that profess arms, in which the movements
The harm that comes from accelerated movements.	are more accelerated, quick, and sudden. Many times this results in exhaustion, and exhaustion results in fear, shock, and weakness, and from all this, a loss of confidence in reaching victory. In the brief time that they battle, they are out of breath and choke, because they always place the body in some of the
Note.	extremes (as we have already said) – the most used being extended and spreading the feet much.

At the point that they need to give a step, whether to injure the opponent or to defer some movement that they make by gaining the time that is spent on making the first movement, which is being reduced to the moderate angle, and so that they don't miss their intent, the body has to be moved with greater velocity. As has already been said and is well known, all movement is the cause of heat, which will be more if it would be more accelerated, and more movements would make the natural heat have more heat and more necessity for fresh air to be conserved, without burning up completely. This is seen when they exercise, as they go in continuous movements, so afflicted and breathless in the little time that they battle – they tire, sweat, and choke. It is necessary to forsake the sword, because of the movements that are done (having the body in some of the extremes) being great work. It follows that one who will make less movements will tire less, and one who makes more will tire more, as is ordinarily seen that one who walks is less tired than one who runs and jumps or does another quick exercise. On the contrary, in having the body erect, it is disposed to attend to one's determinations, to serve the understanding and will with more promptness, and to impede the opponents movements, making them so calmly, without any fatigue or work. There is no doubt that one is more tired in an hour of exercise of running, jumping, or bar throwing, than in walking six, and it better conserves the breath, due to some movements being so haphazard, and others so tame and calm. Because of the importance of the conservation of breath, a particular point has to be written, due to its importance being particular, in which you will see what is missing here.

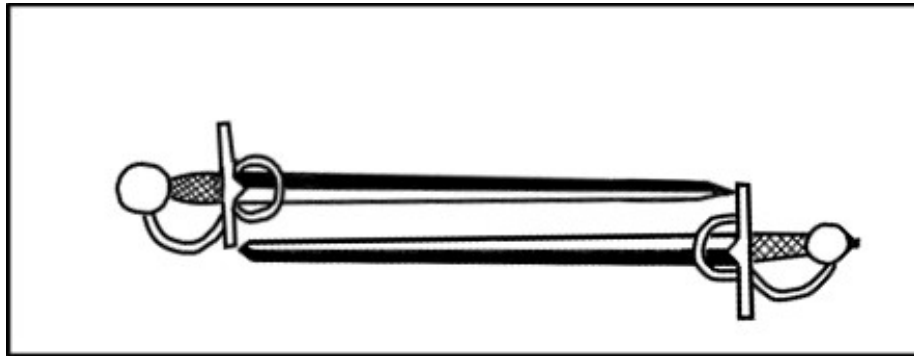
We have resolved that having the body erect, in moderate angle, results in these and many other advantages that could be manifested, such that we will demonstrate the bad by coming with certainty in knowledge of the good, because a thing is known better when close to its opposite. The conclusion of this point is understanding that being positioned as we demonstrate in the figure of the man is better, where the body is profiled and disposed to attend to its defense. Since it is promised how one gains the degrees to the profiles will be manifested in its place, I remit it to you.

Why the nude man was painted.

The first man that we placed nude is in order to demonstrate the integrity that you have to have in the joints of the legs as well as in the arm. It is understood that one reprehends the vice that the vulgars have when they position themselves or exercise in bending the right knee, and other times the left, and even sometimes sinking it to the ground, believing it gallant. It would be well-deserved that the right angle exploited their defect there, so that they pay for their folly and learned their lesson about placing themselves in a similar extreme later. All of which you have to avoid as something so harmful, and learn and use what we say and demonstrate, as a thing of such advantage. The one that we place clothed is also to advise you how you have to exercise the arms, without removing your cloak or sword, being appropriate, as will be said when we deal with the exercise that you have to have so that you truly attend the occasions more easily.

Why the clothed one was placed.

Mean of proportion of equal swords,
very important.



THE significance of these two swords together, equal in quantity and length, is of utmost importance; it is the first thing that you have to do with your opponent, because a good ending to any work has its origin in the beginning. As the philosopher Pittacus says, the half is more than the whole, which is the same as saying that the difficulty of a work is in the beginning and its success, and the particular intent that you should bring has to be divided into two. The first is recognizing the opponent's sword by means of the mean of proportion (which is the sense of this demonstration), which will consider the length of it, ensuring that the opponent's sword does not pass the quillons of yours. In this way, you will comprehend the movement that one will make to give whichever strike, which you will do without difficulty, as there will be such distance from the point of their sword to your body (having your arm extended straight) that it will be impossible not to know it.

Carranza,
declaration,
fol. 2

The other is that having chosen such mean of proportion (which is measuring the swords according to Carranza), the opponent will not be able to make a movement, withdrawing back, that you do not also comprehend and even subject if you will quickly progress forward as much as they will regress back. Your step will be equal to theirs, and with more advantages, because one going forward is walking naturally (as we have already said in another place), which is done without any work, but that which is done backward, aside from not being as long, goes with less certainty. What's more, consider that any movement that is done by throwing the foot back is not for wounding (such movement being from the mean of proportion), which will result in you having more space to go forward. This mean of proportion is nothing other than a comparison and certain respect of two quantities of the same type. As Marsilio Ficino says in Plato's *Timaeus*, because an equal quantity is compared and conferred with another equal quantity, this is when the swords are proportionate together or measured in right angle, as the demonstration manifests. The mean of proportion is a convenient place for any cause of *destreza*, to exit or enter with certainty, without passing into the superfluous or lacking what is necessary. Because of this, it is very properly called a mean, lacking all extremes; being placed in it, you will neither be so close to your opponent that they can offend you without you knowing their movement, nor so distant that they, or you, can't be wounded with any small movement.

You can easily impede any movement that they will form, having knowledge of whether they can reach you with such movement or not, by means of the distance they will have from their sword to your body, and the size of one's own movement, which are two of the fundamentals on which *destreza* is founded.

As Geronimo de Carranza says, many of the professors of arms have lacked this knowledge, without having consideration of it, but in taking the sword in hand, they carelessly come to their opponents. This results in them being wounded, by not knowing what the distance is from body to body, and sword to sword, nor whether they will be able to reach to wound with a small or large movement. It is then the conclusion of this point to know what weapon the opponent carries, and what movements they make, with which parts, and what quality and size, and what species. I say size in the parts of strength that will be communicated, because some of the movements that they make are tepid attacks, without having any effect of wounding; it is also knowing the movements or steps of the feet in order to know the difference that there has to be, which we will deal with in its place. I say species in knowing what genus of strike they will want to form, whether *tajo*, *revés*, or thrust, due to the remedy that has to be applied having to be different for each one. Finally, to be sure that without a new determination and movement of the opponent, you will not be able to be wounded. This determination has to be very well known; you have to choose said mean of proportion, trusting that from there, if your opponent will want to wound you, they are forced to make a new movement of the foot, body, and arm.

Carranza, folio 27.

The *diestro* notes.

What is size in *destreza*.

What is species in *destreza*.

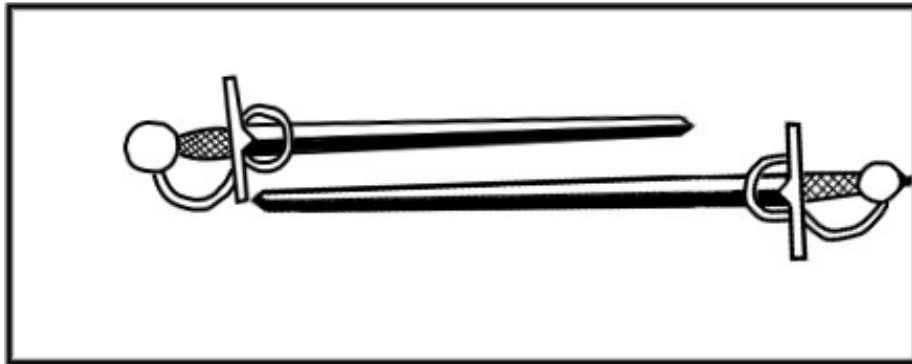
It will be impossible in any other way, as for example: if a rounded circle was made with a step, with the leg being the point in the center of said circle, and one wanted to make another, greater or lesser, they wouldn't be able to except by changing the step to long or short. From that point, without opening or closing it, if one wanted to make another circle, it would necessarily be on the circumference that was made first, without making another again. Thus, with your sword being in the mean of proportion, however many movements that the opponent would make, if they would not move the foot forward, they could not reach to wound. In making movement, it will be easy to know to delay it or wound, as we will say ahead.

Objection to
the mean of
proportion.

Infallible
solution in
favor of the
mean of
proportion.

Some who have wanted to be witty have said that the mean of proportion is not certain, due to requiring the opponent's company, with them being free lord of their will. They will not consider that the body is the object of the strike, and if the opponent will want to execute it, they necessarily have to pass through the mean in order to have effect, unless it is given in the air. All the arguments and objections cease by understanding that in whichever posture that the opponent will be positioned – high or low, to one side or the other, curved or straight, with a long or short sword, quickly or slowly – that if the body has to receive the strike, the strike has to be composed of movements, and their sword necessarily has to come to the point of the opponent's, then to the middle and to the end, until coming to the body. Being so, when their sword will come to the place where you had chosen the mean, being stopped, you will do the same as if you would have chosen it, whether by your cause without being preceded by theirs more than the disposition of waiting, or by means of said effects of the strike. But if one will not want to wound, nor even want to wait, there is no *destreza* for that, nor will it be necessary since they flee.

Mean of proportion of the short sword against the long sword.



SOME people, guided by a false and thoughtless opinion, have taken to carrying swords longer than the mark,⁶⁶ thinking that they are safer with them. They have sought to confirm and introduce this opinion as good, having made (or brought to their purpose) an axiom that says a finger of sword, and a palm of spear, is a great advantage.⁶⁷ They are right that it is a great advantage – not for them, but for their opponents who will carry short arms, because of how the dagger has great strength in all parts due to the quantity of its length being small. Geronimo de Carranza says that it is all center, because it is closer to the origin of strength, which is the arm; I call it origin for the sword, which Carranza calls the principal center.

Why the dagger has great strength.

⁶⁶ Established laws set the mark for maximum blade length (cross to tip) at $5/4$ vara, which is approximately 41 inches or 104 centimeters.

⁶⁷ *dedo* (finger) is a small unit of length, about $2/3$ inch or 17 millimeters.

palmo (palm) is the distance from outstretched thumb to pinky, about 8 inches or 20 centimeters.

Example
against the
long sword.

Carranza, fol.
157.

The intent of
those who
carry long
swords.

Example for
the long
sword.

On the contrary, the long sword is weaker, as its length is such that it is remote and far from this center, and the movements will also be very weak and easily impeded and knocked down. For example, if we hit a long and thin cane with a short and somewhat thick stick, even though little force would be delivered by such a blow because of the cane being so weak and skinny, due to its length it would drop to the floor, compelled by that small blow. On the other hand, if we hit the stick with the cane, its blow would have no effect, due to the stick being close to the center of its own strength. Since our author, with such firm examples, proved this point in the demonstration of the graduated sword, and experience on his part has proven it, I don't have to be detained in this. I only want to give, with this demonstration of the long and short sword, the mean that you have to choose if your opponent will have a long sword. Follow the order of the previous demonstration in everything, not allowing the point of the opponent's sword to pass the quillons of yours, for the reasons given before. From there, whichever movement that one does will be well-known as it is easily remedied, due to the sword being so long. The particular intent of those who carry long swords is to throw some terrible punching thrusts⁶⁸ from outside. If they were *tajos* or *reveses*, as they are so long, the movements will also be so long that you will have space to injure them without danger. For example, we place a sign in a small wheel that goes around, and in turning it, we will see that because its circumference is small, it quickly runs its course and returns.

68 *estocadas de puño*

But if we consider a crane that there usually is where some edifice is erected, and we also place a sign and follow the course of its return, we will see that it is necessary to wait a long time. As it is so large, even though it goes as quickly as the small, it doesn't conclude its journey and turn with such speed, as appears in the demonstration of the three circles that the arm makes. Thus, although the long sword delivers all the force that it has, with respect to its length, it has to be slow in its circular movements (which are the *tajos* or *reveses*); if they were straight thrusts, they would be weak, as said. If the one with the short sword will enter close to the one with the long sword with the speed that will be required, they will not be able to free themselves or free the sword, due to its length. But if the one with the long sword would want to enter close to the one with the short sword, they will not achieve their intent, because one will easily free it and injure them. It is the same as if we will want to use a spear in a confined space; it will be impossible due to its length being such, but a sword or dagger can be used with ease, each thing regulated by its quantity. This is enough to understand that it is rather advantageous to carry a short sword, due to the referred advantages, as well as not going around as a marked person; it is a superscript that one carries which all read either that they are arrogant, or that they are anxious or quarrelsome, or that they are of little spirit, as they trust more in the length of their sword than themselves. Finally, if only to remove what all the common people look to in someone, one has to avoid all extremes. As each one is considered as valiant and as spirited as another, there is no reason to carry more advantageous arms than another, because when they defeat someone, they don't leave them justly defeated, but with a well-known advantage, due to which the victory would not be esteemed.

Example
against the
long sword.

The reasons
one should not
carry a long
sword.

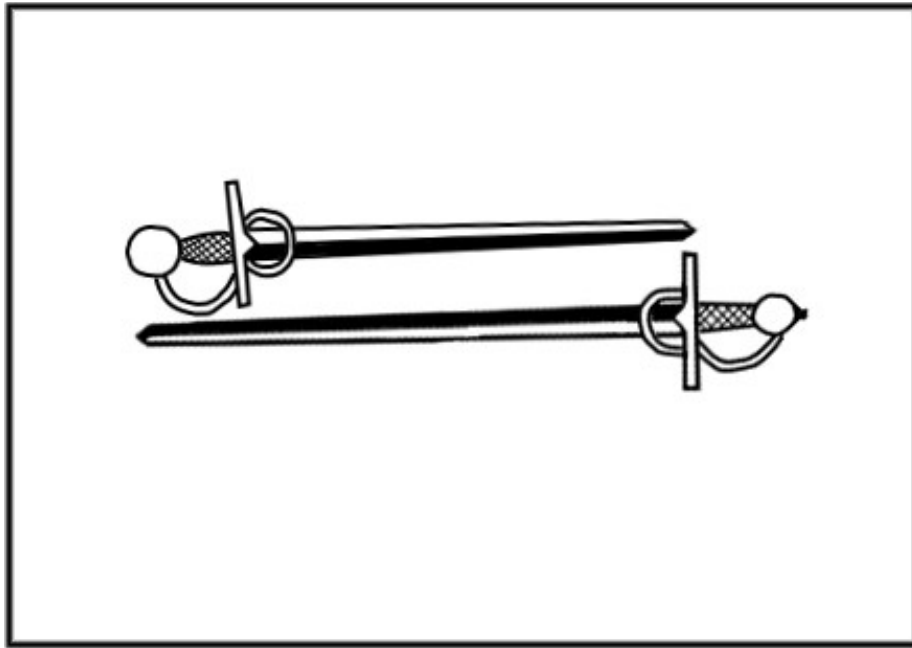
Objection
against this
point.

Solution.

Like all the rest that is written, this has not been free from the objections of the envious, in favor of their long swords, being founded in saying: how can carrying them be harmful, since they have two effects – the one, wounding the one with the short sword with that excess of length that their sword has, and the other being farther from them due to of the same length. They don't want to consider that the body of a person is where the strikes receive the name of their effect by means of the execution, and where they have to be given so that they are truly wounds.⁶⁹ These have to be given with the sword; even though it may be as long as one can consider, it cannot stop until reaching the body. In reaching to the body, which is where they come to lose the force that is delivered, a small impediment may be placed by the one with the short sword, and the artifice will be toppled and not wound, remaining displaced from that lordship that it had in the sword. The one with the short sword will make use of it by means of the movement that they will make with their sword and the step that they will give with their feet. With this, this point is concluded, as it has been proven not only with reason and examples, but confirmed with enough experience.

⁶⁹ The word *herida* is used to refer to a strike that reaches execution. It has been translated throughout as “strike” rather than its literal meaning of “wound” to avoid confusion. Here, Pacheco explains why the word for wound has been used. Further discussion of this is given on f. 84v-85v.

Mean of proportion of the long sword against the short sword.

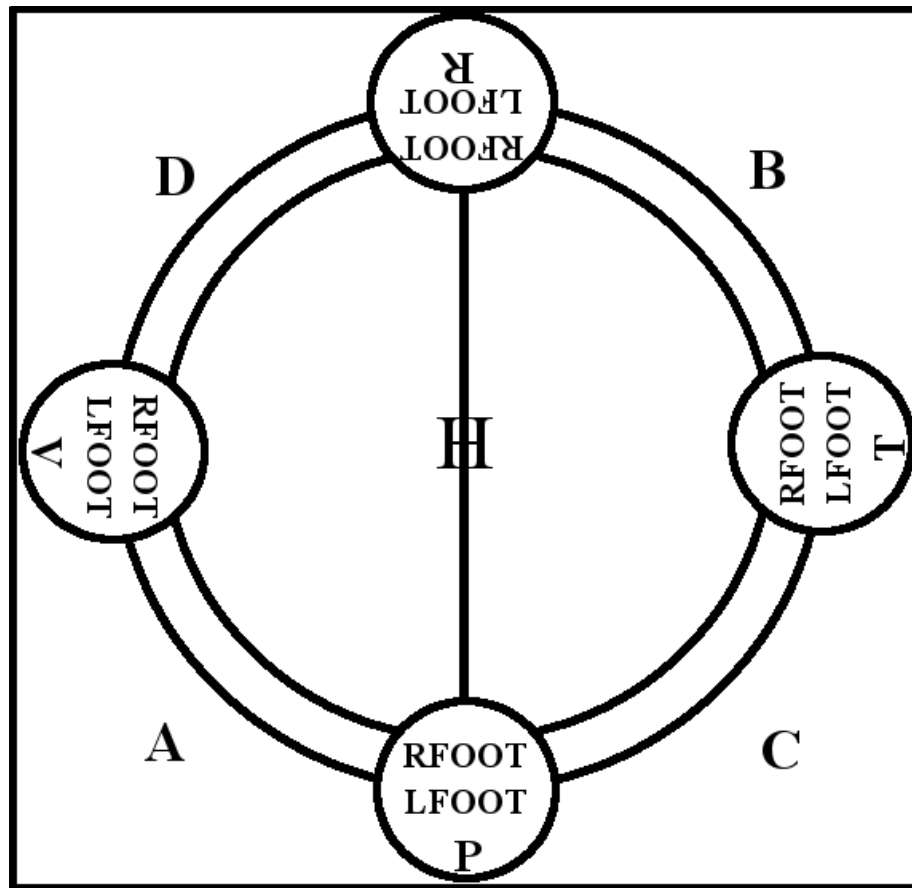


WE have proven well in the previous demonstration the deceitful confidence of those that carry long swords and the danger that they have with them. But the good doctor, even though they see the sick already too far gone and with no hope of recovery, doesn't stop applying some remedy, so that when one cannot escape the sickness that they suffer, at least they live a few more days, helping nature. Thus our author, like a good doctor (on this subject), didn't want to make it impossible for one who carried a long sword to be defended, but to apply the remedy so that at least, even though it is not for being completely free from one with the short sword, if they would be *diestro*, are entertained more than being able to defend, and they will have this remedy.

Note

Because it can happen that you are found with a long sword, or that the opponent's is so short that yours has advantage even though it is only of the mark, it suits you to note that the mean of proportion that you will choose is such that the quillons of your sword come to the point of your opponent's, and no more, for the reasons that have been said. In this point, if the opponent will not choose a convenient mean for the sword that they will carry, which is shown in the demonstration before this, it will be dangerous, and with a small movement, they will be wounded. As the length of your sword will pass almost to the middle of their arm due to the shortness of theirs, the movement that you will make cannot be easily remedied or even comprehended, because the distance will be so small. This is the point where the knowledge of the two *diestros* is better seen and shown, carrying unequal arms, as each one works to give the mean of proportion suitable for them. One who will take note of this and seek to know the means of all arms and give that which suits what they carry, whether long or short, will never be wounded. After having chosen their mean, their opponent will not make a movement that is unknown at the beginning, and it is remedied with the inequality of the steps, as we have advised in other parts, and we will advise.

Key and governor of *destreza*.



WE justly give two titles to this demonstration, as proper in the names as they are similar in the effects; we call it the key and governor of *destreza*, because the effects that the key (which is the first) has are three: open, close, and guard. The present demonstration does the same in *destreza*, because if you will want to enter into its most important subject, which is certain and true defense, this is the master key of all its effects and secrets.

It makes the effect of closing, because going by it, it closes the door to the opponent's determinations, making an impregnable fortress in which the *diestro* can defend from the disordered impetus of their opponent, which is where the effect of guarding is fulfilled. The effects that the governor makes are teaching and guiding things to a good end. It does the work of teaching, as it clearly uncovers the disadvantages and dangers that can occur in the course of a battle. It does the work of a guide, as, by the safe and plain path, it frees one from the many dangers that each step offers, or will be able to offer, in the variation of the techniques that the opponent will be able to form. The other demonstrations hang on this demonstration; this is the beginning and end of the defense of a person, the certain sea chart for navigating the dangerous gulf of *destreza* by which one arrives to the port of safety, the certain path one has to walk to go without injury. Finally, one who will leave it has certain perdition (not knowing the other paths that they can travel, of which a particular demonstration will be made before we enter into the universal). Through it, strikes of second intention are formed (which we will speak of in their place). Through it, there is offense and defense. Through it, any strikes are deviated, and any movements of any type are delayed. Finally, it is the shield and defense of man; to understand it, you have to presuppose that, positioned with your opponent with swords or any other arm, a rounded circle is considered and formed from your right foot to the opponent's right foot.

Our author placed this in the fifth demonstration of his book, Carranza, fol. 183 which is the same that we place in this demonstration of the feet, whose significance is as follows. In the small circles of point R and point P, as manifest by the letters that say right foot and left foot, each one is how you have to be positioned. Having the mean of proportion with the sword, the opponent's will not be able to wound, due to the distance that there is, without making a movement (as said). Thus, you have to seek to have the proper mean in the feet, which is the principal foundation of this edifice. So that you are confident that you will not be in danger, following the order of this demonstration, one considers that you are positioned with your opponent on point P and point R; forming a strike, or an attack, or only a movement, they pass from point R to point V on the side of the circumference that point B signifies. In order to free yourself and remain in the same proportion that you were, and without danger, you have to travel on the side of the circumference of point A to arrive to the small circle of point T with only one geometric step, which is the most that the opponent can step at one time; in this way you will remain in the proportion from before. If they will want to make another movement to point P (which is the point that you left) by the circumference of point C, you have to pass to the circle of point R by the circumference of point D. Keeping always to such mean, it will be impossible to be able to wound you, due to the proportion and distance that you will always bring in traveling on the greater circle.

A circle has no beginning or end.

Euclid, what a sphere is.

Hyginus, book 1 of *Poeticon Astronomicum*, what a sphere is.

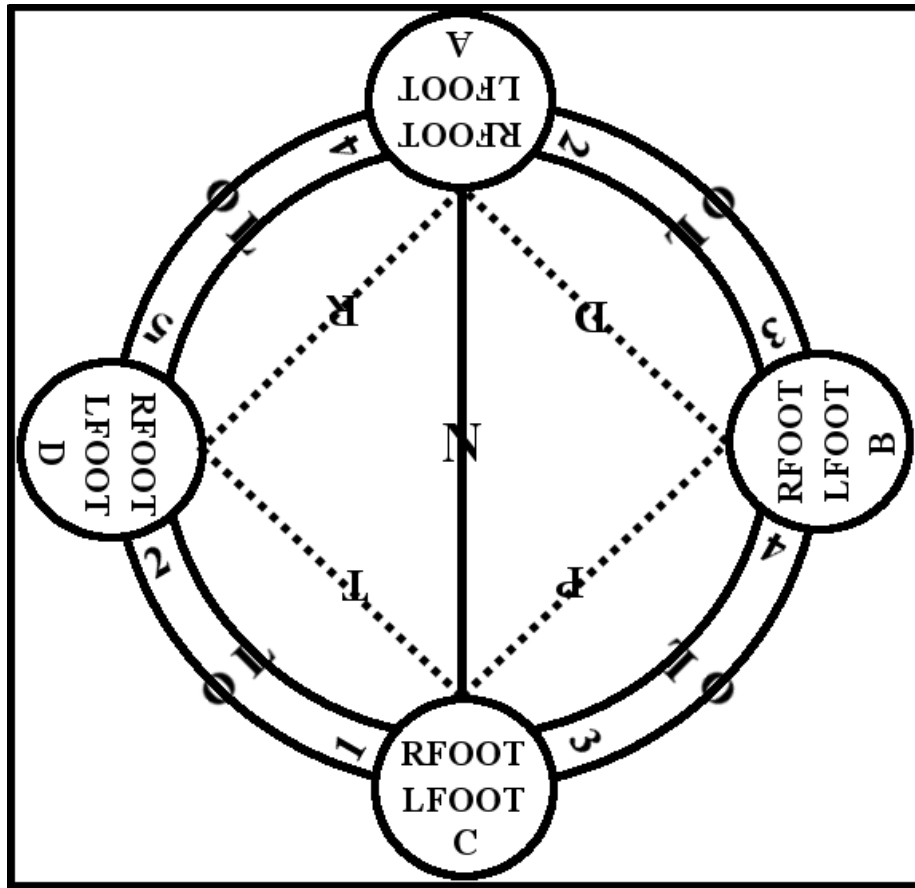
Aristotle, book 2 on the Heavens, perfect circle figure.

Why the circular figure is perfect.

Your opponent will never be able to reach you due to the quality that the circle has, by being a rounded figure that has no beginning or end, because as Euclid says, the sphere is a turn of the circumference around the diameter, revolving until returning to its place; for this reason, it is the most perfect figure among the other solid figures. The grammarian Hyginus says in the first book of the *Poeticon Astronomicum* that the sphere is a rounded figure that has no beginning or end, because in being rounded, all parts are beginning and end. To this purpose, Aristotle says that the circle is a perfect figure, because the beginning is joined with the end. The philosophers conclude that the reason that the circular figure is perfect is because it starts where it ends, and the means are proportionate with the beginning. Finally, it is the doctrine of mathematics that in the circle there is no precedent or subsequent point, but each part of the circle can be beginning and end. Thus, the circular movement that you will make cannot be given a distinct ultimate end, which is still. The circle is also of infinite distance, not because it has infinite quantity, but because it is deprived of a final point, and no end can be marked that cannot also be a beginning. Also, the movements that you will make on the circle can be infinite; thus you will never be reached or wounded. For example, let's assume that this demonstration went around like the wheel of a mill, and we would see that although it gave many turns, one circle would never come together with another. Thus, walking on it, your opponent would never come together with you, because you would always make use of the beginning of their movement.

If they wanted to go on the line of the diameter, which is what point H signifies, it will be necessary for you to pass to whichever of the circles, point T or point V, because if you went on the same line, you would meet with them. For example, it is seen when bulls run, that if the bull charges a person, in order to be free from it, one doesn't go straight at the bull, but departs to one of the sides; thus the bodies of the *diestros* should never come together, the faces equally upright. If they come together at some time, it is by means of some extremes of arm and body, as will be said ahead, but in the rest, you always have to seek inequality in all. Because when we deal with the universal, we have to be founded in this demonstration due to being its principal fundamental, this is enough to understand this point.

Demonstration of the rectilinear angles.



BECAUSE one has to deal with angles in many parts of this book as we have promised, and this demonstration and the preceding have the same sense, both serve in *destreza* as a guide to the *diestro* for the path that they have to travel, in order free oneself from their opponent with certainty. I suppose that those who communicate and deal with Euclid understand the term angle, and it will be very strange to the rest who will deal with it and its declaration.

The four different angles that our author says will not be spoken of (which are one that the arm makes with the sword, one where the strength of the body is, one of the good posture of feet, and the solid one that the arm and the body makes) since we have already dealt with some and will deal with others in their place. We will only speak of that in which the *diestro* has to be placed to give a strike, or only remove it if they will want. For knowledge of this, you have to suppose that, being positioned face-to-face with your opponent, in proportion, there is an angle or corner of two equal lines, one to the right and the other to the left. This is called the rectilinear angle, which Euclid defines with these words: a plane angle is the inclination that two lines make when they touch at one point and are not placed in a line. These are the lines signified by point D and point P, or those signified by point T and point R, and that corner that is formed where they touch in the small circles, called an angle. This is the door where the *diestro* has to exit some techniques, and enter into them, as Carranza says, because positioned in the manner that we have advised, you have certain paths to injure your opponent and also to be defended; there are six, three on each part or side (leaving aside other differences that there are for when we deal with the universal). To understand them, you have to consider that if you would want to form a strike, carrying the arm and body straight, which we call right, it has to be traveling on either of the sides of the lesser circumference, which will be point L, giving a curved step.

Carranza, fol.
29.

As the circumference is made of a curved line, the step that is given on it also has to be curved. One has to step until coming to the point in which the strike will have effect, not sticking to the greater circle that point O signifies, because this is where the mean of proportion that is said in the demonstration before is chosen. But if you wanted to shorten it and come closer to your opponent, you have to make use of the angles, going on either of the lines that form them, giving a straight step, because the line on which one has to go is straight, the step also has to be so; although, it is true that one is as long a step as the other, as both stop at the same point. The advantage is known by shortening the path, as seen in the lines that form the angles, which are closer than the sides of the circumference. The other path is close to the line of the diameter, which point N signifies; the strikes that are given by it are sometimes straight, and others with some extremes of the body and arm, as will be said in their place. If your opponent will want to wound you through one of these three paths that they also have, you have another three for your defense, and wounding them when you will want, making use of the beginning of their movement, with this consideration. One being positioned in the small circle of point A, and the other in that of point E, if the first wanted to come to wound you on the side of the circumference of the lesser of the two large circles, from 1 to 2, you will be able, making use of the beginning of that movement, to go to the left of the same circumference from 2 to 3, giving a strike (which one it has to be will be given in all the discourse of the book).

You will have to understand the same if they went from 3 to 4, because then you will have to pass from 4 to 5, and this is how much both move with curved steps. But when they will come to wound you on the side of said circumference, if you wanted to give a straight step on the line that point D signifies, making use of that corner that it makes, the strike would be stronger due to it reaching farther. But if they wanted to go where they will, and not on the side of the circumference, and they form the angle that point T signifies, you will be able to go on that which point D signifies at the beginning of the movement, giving a strike. If they really wanted to come to wound on the line of the diameter, which is that which point N signifies, you will be able to make use of whichever of the angles is left to your disposition. This is with the consideration that if they will want to wound on one side, you have to wound on the opposite, because if you went where they went, you will both meet with much danger. You will also be able to wound on the same line of the diameter with some extremes of body and arm, but it is not as safe a path as the others. I am of the opinion (due to the experience that I have) that you separate from it as much as you will be able, because aside from there being few propositions or techniques that can be done on it, there is much risk, because the bodies will be able to come close. Also, many times one person has been seen to clinch with another, and having greater strength to throw their opponent to the floor, this is the cause to kill them. Also, those that are accustomed to the *brazales*⁷⁰ and other things, in lacking science and being found without *destreza* in order to be defended, they close with their opponents and many times disrupt all their artifice;

One cannot go on the line of the diameter without danger.

⁷⁰ Armor worn on the forearm, also the name of a technique of using the forearm to defend against or detain the opponent's sword.

Why one
should not go
on the line of
the diameter.

Note.

this is only done on the line of the diameter. In order to avoid these inconveniences that can happen, the demonstration is given so that with it, you seek a continuous inequality with your opponent. Take this argument as a maxim: when my opponent wants to wound me in my right side, whether with *revés* or thrust, giving a curved step on the left-hand side of the circumference, I want to do the same, giving the same step on the side of the circumference, and wound in the same side with a thrust if they will want to wound with a thrust, and with *revés* if they will form a *revés*, or thrust against the *revés*, or half *revés* against the same *revés*. It is the same if they will go on the other side, always graduating the steps to the opponent from their steps, so that you will never meet with them. Although it appears that we go succinctly in these two demonstrations, how the techniques should be done is not said in these; this is no more than giving knowledge of them, manifesting what each one is and how it serves. We are making a preparation, so that in the discourse of the book, when we say a strike close to the line of the diameter, it is understood that it is close to the straight line that parts the circles, signified by point N. When it says on the side of the circumference, you will know that the step has to be curved, as the former is straight. When it is advised to be necessary to make use of the right-hand angle, it is understood that it is the line that point R signifies, and when on the left, it is what point D signifies; with this, you will not be confused.

It is the conclusion of all, and the last appreciation of all, that you always have to attempt a perpetual inequality of bodies and lines, for injuring as well as being defended, which will be very important. Study and exercise these two demonstrations regularly, as they are the key and door of the *destreza*. An objection to this demonstration has been given by those that have this charge by the particular provision of ignorance and envy, the lords which they obey, and lieutenants of malice, whose usual style and sneakiness is to attempt to obscure the truth. Pursuing that, they have declared war on it, giving no quarter to the revealer of their underhanded deceits. It has been said that it would be better to not subject the person that goes on paths so close to their opponent, but far from them, as it will be safer. I suppose that it must be that going on the greater circle should be valued more than the rest, as it is where one has to choose the mean of proportion that has been referred to, because at the end they are more distant and will have less danger. In my opinion, and that of many others, it is more fearful cowardice than consideration or prudence; but there is no blame for those who are commanded, and their lord Fear does not give them license for more. Even this which they are offered exceeds their commission, but I want them to consider the opinion of Pliny the Younger who dares to affirm that in war, one who has more fear has more danger, and will end up in danger. The divine Plato says that one whose spirit is not increased by difficulty and danger is not strong or spirited. This is the reason for reaching such famous victories as we see each day, because if some went fleeing far from others, they would never know victory. Since science in any time gives advantage to man, this diminishes fear and is a possession that no force can remove.

Fearful
objection.

One whose
spirit isn't
increased
when in
danger is not
strong or
spirited.

Trusting in that will free you from danger, as according to the opinion of Seneca, no danger can be defeated without another. You are not perturbed by the vain opinion of those who, in thinking that they know, place objections to anything that is dealt with, and particularly in this, as it is the cause of the fear that rules them, whose effect is such that they even fear safe things; consider that to a spirited person, nothing disturbs them. I followed this doctrine, as it is confirmed with such long experience, without hearing similar things, being certain that one who knows what is enough to prevail knows much, and there is nothing more difficult, no victory more rare, than defeating the ignorant, chatty, and foulmouthed.

Particular and important advice on the simple and double steps and their differences.

THERE are two things (either of them being enough) that force me to advise you of this point, as it is so important that, without affronting the other demonstrations, it is equal to them all, as what they are and make use of are manifest in it. The first is the desire that I have that no point remains without declaring it to you, and the other is the mistrustful fear that I have always had of the cruel detractors who find where to fling their fierce teeth and cruel claws, at least as much as possible for me.

In the prior demonstration entitled key and governor of *destreza*, we dealt with the steps, and also in all the discourse of this book, they have to be dealt with. It is certain that there is no strike that is executed, delayed, or impeded without them, due to being one of the principal fundamentals of *destreza*, and the means by which the techniques have to be, and by which the *diestro* injures their opponent and is defended. Also, in the other demonstrations that have to be made to advise you of the order of the strikes, there have to be lines which will manifest the paths where one has to go for the execution of them; some will be long, and others shorter, some curved, and others straight, which will be the cause of some perplexity. Also, Geronimo de Carranza sometimes deals with simple and double steps. All is resolved without any doubt or objection, although to fulfill this promise, it is no less important to us to value and take shelter in serious authors, whose authority is the most principal part of our defense, because it is an ordinary thing to be certain in what is proven by those we hold as truthful. Petrus Apianus, in his book of *Cosmographia*,⁷¹ and Pierio Valeriano, Pier Vincenzo Dante de Rinaldi, and Pedro Nunes, commentators on Sacrobosco⁷² in dealing with the measures and their differences (as far as the steps⁷³), say that there are three differences. These are step, simple step, and double step, and each one of these is given its measure and certain account, because they say that the step has to be two feet in length;⁷⁴ in this manner, having set the two feet, between the one and the other, there has to be a space or distance of another foot.

There is no strike that is executed or delayed without steps of the feet.

How many differences there are in steps.

What is a step.

71 *Cosmographicus liber*. Apianus, Petrus. 1524

72 Johannes de Sacrobosco, 13th c. astronomer at University of Paris.

73 Pacheco uses three terms here that have all been translated as “step” - *paso*, *pasada*, and *compás*. The original text does not maintain a clear distinction between terms, so they have been condensed for simplification.

74 *pie* (foot) is a unit of measurement approximately 11 inches or 28 centimeters.

How the steps have to be understood. In order to understand it better, you have to be advised that as the studious master Alejo Venegas says very well, the step does not end at the point of the forward foot, but at the beginning of the heel, because the forward foot is not of the step that is given, but the beginning of that which has to be given. The step begins in a solid foot and ends in an empty foot. The solid foot is the left, which is stationary, and the empty is the distance or space that there is from it to the heel of the right foot, as said. This step is when we walk slowly, without haste or acceleration, and for this reason, this step is figuratively that which a woman gives.

What the simple step is. The cosmographers want the simple step to be two and a half feet, being counted as in the first, beginning solid and ending empty. The left foot occupies the solid, and a foot and a half of empty until the right heel, although the cosmometrist (which is one who measures) always measures the first step as three feet, and the rest as two and a half. Even though in cosmography one always has to keep this measure, in *destreza* we will be able to teach with reason that one always has three feet, one solid and two empty, because in *destreza*, there are no continuous steps. I mean to say that it is not like common or measured walking, where we also walk with the left foot as with the right, and once we start to move, not stopping until the end of where we intended to walk or measure, and thus it is no more than a beginning. But those that are given in *destreza*, as always no more than one step is given; this is with the right foot (or with the left when it suits), and we set both feet there.

The *diestro* notes.

If we want to give another, we begin again, always being three feet, like the first that the cosmometrist gives, since one is always beginning. The only difference is in placing the feet, because in the cosmographic measure, the point of the left foot is placed straight to the heel of the right, which cannot be permitted in *destreza*, because such posture would not be profiled, as it should be. Having to have the feet in a cross, as in the demonstration of the feet, it will not be able to be called a completely solid foot, but you have to understand it in this manner. The left foot, which is crossed, with the distance of the span that there is from it to the right foot, that we already said, is justly the length of the foot that the left foot has to occupy. Thus the measure will be certain, and the same in the second, third, and the rest of the steps. This step is what we give when we walk, neither very quickly nor slowly.

Why one cannot place the the feet directly point to heel in *destreza*.

The double step has to be five feet in length, one solid and four empty. This is the greatest step that a person can give when walking quickly, such that they remain in potency of lifting a foot without work when setting the other down. As we have already said in the demonstration of the feet, the movement of a person consists of rest and work. They call this double step a geometric step; what Geronimo de Carranza calls a geometric step, which in *destreza* is what we give neither quickly nor slowly, is the simple step that we said before this. When one says double step, it is not because one is given after the other after having chosen the mean of proportion, because with only one, one has to wound and be disposed for it, but because it is greatest that a person can give, and double the ordinary, or simple, and redouble of the step.

How many feet in length the double step has to be.

Carranza, declaration, fol. 2.

The simple step in cosmography is the simple step in *destreza*, and the geometric is the double step.

Thus, the simple step in cosmography is the simple step in *destreza*, which our author calls the geometric step; the double step in *destreza* is the geometric step in cosmography. In the discourse of this book, we will always keep to the first style of calling the simple step geometric, until we have to enter in the universal, because then one has to make preparation for convenient things, and a demonstration will be made on the order of walking. On the part of what was said, without the authors that have been cited, there is also Euclid, Johannes Stöffler in the book that he made on the use of the astrolabe,⁷⁵ mathematician and friar Luca di Borgo in his book on arithmetic and geometry,⁷⁶ and many others that could be mentioned, but these are enough.

On the size of the geometric foot.

The doubt that could be placed on the size that each foot has to have in detail is declared by the same authors. Placing it here is not to our purpose, because they come to detail it such, saying that the finger has to be four barley corns wide, and the palm has to be four fingers. The foot is four palms, but only to say that the foot that they say has to be twelve points, or according to another opinion (which seems to me that it is more received), precisely fourteen. This is in the measures of cosmography, because in our facility, due to not all bodies being equal, neither will the steps be; each one will always be in its own manner, because one who is tall will have a long foot because it has to be in complete proportion.

⁷⁵ *Elucidatio fabricae ususque astrolabii*, Johaness Stöffler, 16th century.

⁷⁶ *Summa de arithmetica, geometria, proportioni et proportionalita*, Luca Bartolomeo de Pacioli, 1494.

It will be the same for one who is small, and the legs and thighs in proportionate length to them, without being obligated that the double step that they will give has a distance from one foot to the other of five feet in length, each one of fourteen points. If no more than ten fit because the measure of their body does not require more, then it will only be possible to have five of their feet. In this (in general), their certain measures are well considered, regarded, and experienced by the curious and diligent statuary sculptors. As Vitruvius says that the foot of each person is one-sixth of the stature and height of their body,⁷⁷ it is also measured in fingers and palms. So the double step that one would give will have a distance from the left foot to the right heel of four empty feet of their measure, as one should not have some extreme like being tall with a small foot, or being small in stature with a foot longer than one-sixth of their body. It will be the same in the simple step, which has three feet of distance, one solid and two empty, from one to the other, and in the step having two feet, one solid and the other empty. For this, our author gives the consideration that one has to have in choosing the proportionate mean with a tall person in the blows of second intention, whose execution is by means of their movement; it has to be chosen according to their stature, with respect to the long step that they will be able to give, and to those of medium stature, it conforms to it because the step will be shorter. Having certainty in this, the execution of the rest will be without fault.

The proportionate mean has to be chosen according to the opponent's stature.

⁷⁷ *De architectura*, Marcus Vitruvius Pollio.

Doubt for
verifying this
truth more.

Another doubt could also be given, which we have prevented, as it is already placed here, even giving it great strength. It is that in *destreza*, sometimes one gives straight steps, and other times curved; the one would be as long as the other, and some have said that the straight is greater than the curved, with respect to going on a direct path, and that the curved is lesser, by giving a crooked path. This doubt is given or will be given in a manner that the straight goes on the line of the diameter or any of the collaterals, and the curved on the side of the circumference. I say to this (not dealing with which reaches more to the opponent, but with the length of the step to one part or another) that in all, all are equal; the double step that would be given on either side of the circumference will be five feet in length, like one that would be given on the line of the diameter, or any of the collateral or imagined lines that make the angles, or any part of the infinite line from point H to point L. I call it such according to Euclid in his first book, proposition twelve. The movements or steps that can be done on this line don't appear difficult to you, because although we have said that all the steps that are given forward are natural movements, those given on the infinite line will not cease being so. It is the reason why, in order to give some step on this line, whether from point A to point L with the right foot, or from point A to point H with the left, one will not work hard to do it, because the socket of the thigh bone is similar to the bone of the shoulder socket, and equal in its movements.

Euclid, book 1,
proposition 12.

Steps on the
infinite line.

This is in the
demonstration
of the double
step.

Thus we see that we will be able to lift the arm directly from being positioned with the opponent, until having it extended as much as it can be, such as when we want to measure a fathom.⁷⁸

But if we wanted to pass it farther back from there, it would be impossible, because neither the socket that the bone makes there nor the fibers that originate in the chest bone would permit it. It is the same in the feet, which would be able to make various straight or curved movements in all of the space that there is from the infinite line (so named because it can be extended infinitely) until returning to it, without being obligated to move on one side or the other. The organization and composure of a person's limbs are not altered, nor is there novelty in them, nor can there be in this while the movement will be natural, without being necessary that something is done with violence; having it, a person then feels uncomfortable and bothered, which inclines them to seek to do such work on another path which is free of such discomfort. It is also good that you take note that the right foot has more ability than the left, because the right has the ability to give straight steps on the infinite line at point L, or curved on the side of the circumference as well as the other parts, until returning to point H on the infinite line, as you will see when we come to the practice. They can be on as many lines as will be able to be drawn from point L of the straight infinite line, on the circumference as well as outside it, to point H on the same line. The left foot only has three movements; the one is for wounding, as we have already said that when the left foot is put in, it is for nothing else. Another is to delay some opposing movement from point A to point H.

The right foot has more ability than the left.

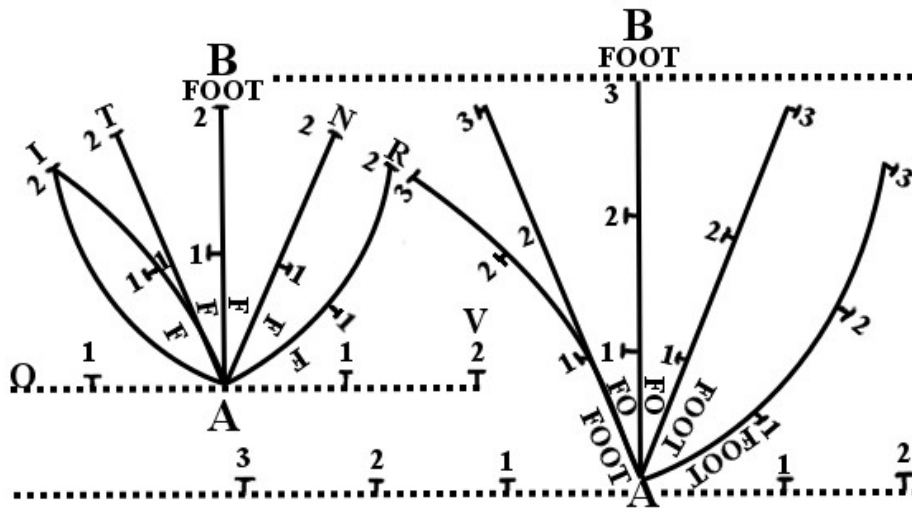
The left foot has only three movements.

⁷⁸ *braza* (fathom or brace) is a unit of measuring length which is approximately the distance between a person's outstretched arms. It is equivalent to six *pies*, or two *varas*, or about 66 inches or 167 centimeters.

The *diestro*
notes what is
very
important.

The last is when the *diestro* wants to degrade backward. The left foot is the principal author that begins only these three movements, and if it was obligated to more, they would be violent and harmful. With this, that which concerns the steps and their differences is declared, without it being necessary to return to deal with it, nor heed the objections that will be placed against it. According to the long experience that has trained me, whenever one would want to wound, delay, or kill their opponent without any danger, I say that the movements that they will do have to be in giving curved or straight steps from the line of the diameter to the side of the circumference of your right side, due to being the more proper part to be able to impede, and be safe, and reach more, as said. This is also because all movement of any animal has its beginning on the right side, and with more ease to the right side, as also said. This being so, one already has such a step as a more natural movement than any other. So that you understand better all that which was said of the steps, curved as well as straight, and the equality that they have in the length and distance, I decided to place it in demonstration, where I will attempt to declare as much as I can, applying each step to the type of blow that is most suitable.

Step. Simple or geometric step.

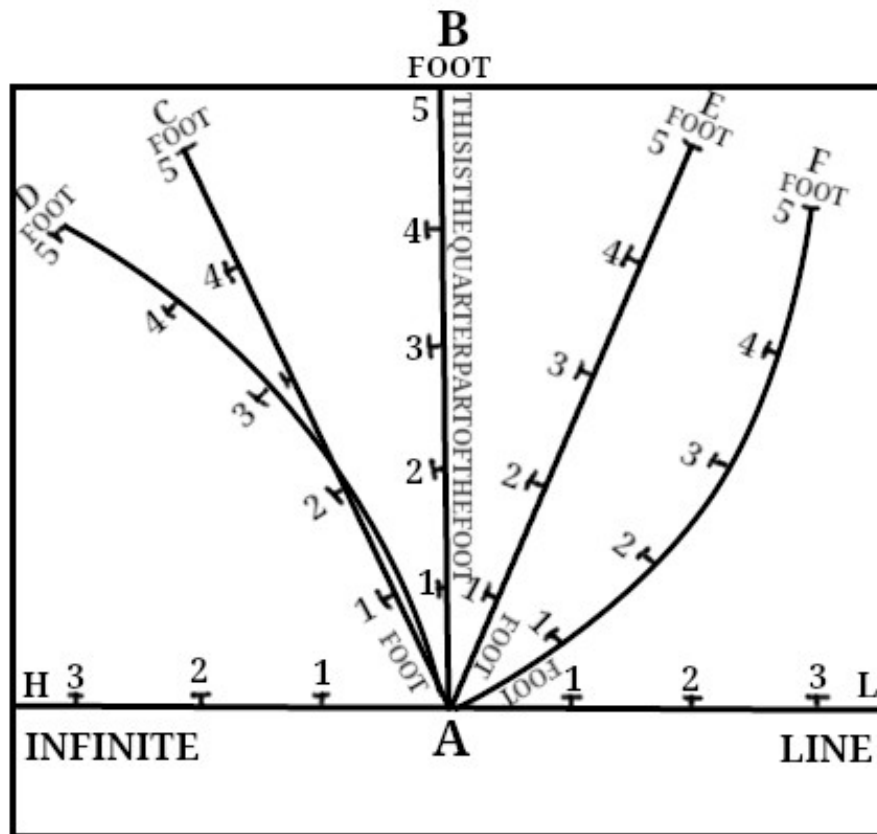


BECAUSE we follow the order of the authors that we have cited in all, it would be just that we begin the first with the step, which is what one gives when they walk, as I have advised. At the same time, the simple step should be declared, which is the step that is given when we walk neither quickly nor slowly, which is what Carranza calls the geometric step, as already said. The step, which is the smallest, has to be two feet in length; the quantity of one is what the left foot occupies, as seen were it says FOOT up to number 1, and the other, which is empty, up to number 2, is the empty foot that there has to be between the one and the other, as seen in the straight line from point A to point B. Thus it is divided in two equal parts, the one solid because the foot occupies it, and the other empty. It is the same on the curved line from point A to point R, and the collaterals from point A to point T, and from point A to point N.

This step rarely serves us in *destreza* because we always work the step (or simple step following Carranza in *destreza*) with vehemence and acceleration. We already said that the geometric step has to be three feet in length: one solid, and two empty. Thus it is divided into three equal parts, as shown from point A to point B, and in the other lines. With this step, which we call simple and geometric, one obligates and narrows the enemy, choosing the proportionate mean, particularly when they have to be wounded in the left side, whether with a circular technique⁷⁹ or thrust. The limitation of when the step has to be simple or double cannot be given, because it has to conform to the opponent's disposition. I mean to say that it conforms to their movements because if they will give a simple step, it's sufficient that yours is as well (after having obligated them and chosen the proportionate mean), because then you will have gained the degrees of the profile. If their step would be doubled, yours would be the same, whether on the collateral line or any other, making that inequality of body and lines that will suit your greater safety and their danger. The declaration that is missing will be said in the following demonstration.

⁷⁹ *tiempo circular* – literally “circular time,” referring to a cut. Interestingly, Domingo Luis Godinho in “Arte de Esgrima” (1599) used *tiempo* to refer to a technique as well.

Geometric or doubled step.



This is according to cosmography and destreza.

IT is said that the double step, which they call geometric in cosmography, has to be five feet in length – four empty and one solid. This is shown by this demonstration, since it is divided into five equal parts, as shown by the straight line from point A to point B.

When the
diestro gives
doubled steps.

From the first number 1 to number 4, there has to be four feet of distance from one to the other; the same for the rest of the lines, curved or straight. Thus, this has to be called the double step due to being the double of the simple step, or according to our author in *destreza*, geometric. But because when the *diestro* makes use of them, it is when they need to quickly gain degrees of the profile on their opponent, to be safe and able to wound without danger. Also, when they want to offend with some *tajo* or *revés*, such step is given on whichever side of the circumference, whether to form them in second intention or first, because when it is close to the line of the diameter, it is in order to form some strikes of first intention that run above the opponent's sword. It is also to afflict the opponent, cutting the lines, leaving little space for their movements and defense, as at this point, no movement nor diligence that the opponent makes is for offense, but only for defense. The step that is given on the straight line may be as large as that which is given to whichever of the sides of the circumference, or to any other place except backward; there can be no doubt, due to the reason we gave for the disposition of the socket of the thigh bone and being able to move to different places. Giving a step to the side of the circumference, one will not be able to reach to the opponent's body as well as if it had been on the collateral, or any other between these two; however, it will reach to wound what is necessary, whether for a circular technique or thrust, and the opponent will not be able to reach with their sword, even if they will be equal length, or even longer, due to the profile.

In the equality of steps, it will happen the same as with the step which, if we set the one leg down at one point, making points at whichever place that we will want to turn it, all will be equal in length, as the leg that was set down is not lifted. Thus, having been established at point A, all the steps that one gives (being double, which is the greatest step that can be given) will be equal, as we have proven through demonstration and the opinion of Euclid, that if lines are given from the center of a circle to its circumference, they will all be equal; in the same manner, all the steps will be equal. It is not necessary to spend more time on this, since any doubt would be removed with what is said, and with taking a step and measuring it, or experiencing it in one's own steps, as when they would not want to believe me, it is certain that experience removes and flattens any doubts with sufficient and certain disillusionment. But trust me, because the extensive experience of this that I have guides me.

Understanding that your curiosity will be the reason you desire to know the length of the geometric foot, the measure of the quarter part of it is placed in the straight line from point A to point B, in a manner that the entire straight line is one of the four parts. Wanting to see all of it, four lengths can be taken, and together the size of the Roman geometric foot will rightly be seen; it will be known to be fourteen points. Thus, one that will have the foot as long and proportionate with the other members, such that from this proportion, it is rightly the sixth part of their body.

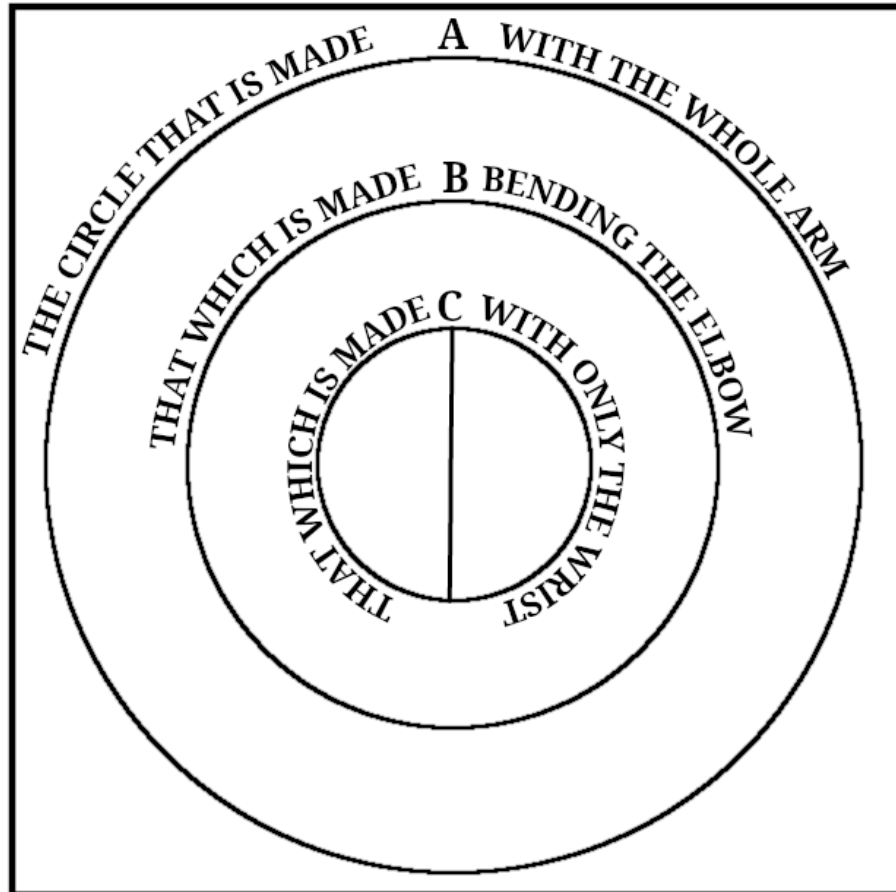
The straight line of the demonstration of the steps is the fourth part of the geometric foot

The simple step that they will give will have three feet in length, which we said it has to have, and double being five as it is, and however much less the length of the foot will be, so the step will also be. Although there will be some that have the foot of this length, I do not know if there will be (at least I have not seen it) one that fits more than fourteen points.

One should
have
knowledge of
the infinite line

The infinite line, which is from point H to point L (given this name not because it contains infinite quantity, but because it can go infinitely), is very necessary for you to know, because in *destreza* it is of much more consideration and of greater craft to be free from the opponent's impetuous and arrogant movements, which are done almost running, because they carelessly throw their whole body on the line of the diameter. This hasty movement, if you traveling on whatever line, whether collateral or any other on the circumference, you would not be able to resist it, nor defend yourself from the strike of their sword, or blow of their head, their movement being so careless, they will come into contact with your body. Thus, it will be suitable to give the step on the infinite line from point A to point L or point H, according to where they will want to wound. Such step given, you will be free of their strike, and you will reach to wound without danger by only remaining upright, extending your sword to their chest. In the demonstrations on the orders of the strikes, you will see by the paths in which they are shown, when the step has to be simple or doubled, and how each of them works, so that in all, you proceed with the true understanding that suits.

Three circular movements that the arm has
in the three joints: shoulder, elbow, and
wrist.



THE composure and organization of the limbs of man is made with such admirable craft, and worked with such strange consideration, that one who will really look at it will find certain and concerted reason in all of them, without excess or shortcoming in any particular office.

Since it is certain (and all philosophers who have speculated on it with more diligence and consideration have affirmed) that God and Nature make nothing in vain, but with great craft and prudence, and because the actions of all them do not serve our purpose now, there is no cause to refer to them; we speak of only the arm, the movements of which being those which we deal with at this point, so that understanding them, you are given notice of any of them and can employ their remedy. You have to consider that the arm of any person (whether in right-angle or curved posture, which we will speak of in its place) only makes, and can only make, three circles. The first and greatest is that which the whole arm makes, as is seen when we bring it all the way around, or when we want to throw a stone, or we want to shoot a sling, which is the same that is done in fencing, in a technique that they call *arrebatar*: this is what is shown in point A. It makes another movement, without moving the center of the arm (which is the shoulder), only bending the second joint of the elbow; this is what they call half *tajo*. Only the middle of the arm is bent, and this is shown in point B to be lesser than the first, because they do not move more than the middle of the arm. It makes another lesser than this, not moving or bending the first or second joint, but with only the wrist, having the whole arm straight or still, as seen when they only want to bring the hand around without moving the arm. This is what is called *mandoble*, and is shown in point C. The wrist alone also makes a half-circular movement, to one side or the other (as the arm also does, as it has liberty to one side rather than the other) as the least circle shows with the line cutting it in half, and because it is a circular movement, we call it half circle.

The arm only makes, and can only make, three circles.

How the half *tajo* is done.

How the *mandoble* is done.

One has to understand that these same three movements or circles are formed on the left side in the manner of *arrebatar*, as said, or on the right, or above the head. Finally, there have to be three, and no more, due to not having more joints, and these are for *tajos*, *reveses*, or *mandobles*. Not speaking of those *tajos* that are commonly done when they have played and want to leave the sword (or set it down, according to them), or those that are called *inviting*, which are impertinent and dangerous movements, as will be said in its place. Neither will we be speaking of the muscles that move the arm to each of the sides, nor those that serve to raise it for the cleaving or flying *tajo*,⁸⁰ nor those that make the nails-up or nails-down parries, or the deviations,⁸¹ nor those which make the violent or natural movement, nor the four muscles that move the wrist, nor even the muscles or tendons, as our author manifests, because this is more for anatomists and doctors than for *diestros*, and it would cause us great confusion. Aside from which, if they would give a cut,⁸² it would be inconsiderately superfluous to inquire which muscle lifts the arm to give such a strike, since it will be enough to have it in the head and understand that the lifting of the arm was for the cut. We proceed to the particular sense of this demonstration and exemplify it so that it is easy. We say that in placing a bet on four equal people, in walking or running, with one placed on the greatest circle shown in point A, another placed on the one shown in point B, and another on the one in point C, and the other on whichever in the middle, which one will go around first, going on the circumference or regulated to a straight path?

Carranza, folio 154.

Example to manifest this demonstration.

80 *tajo hendido o volado*

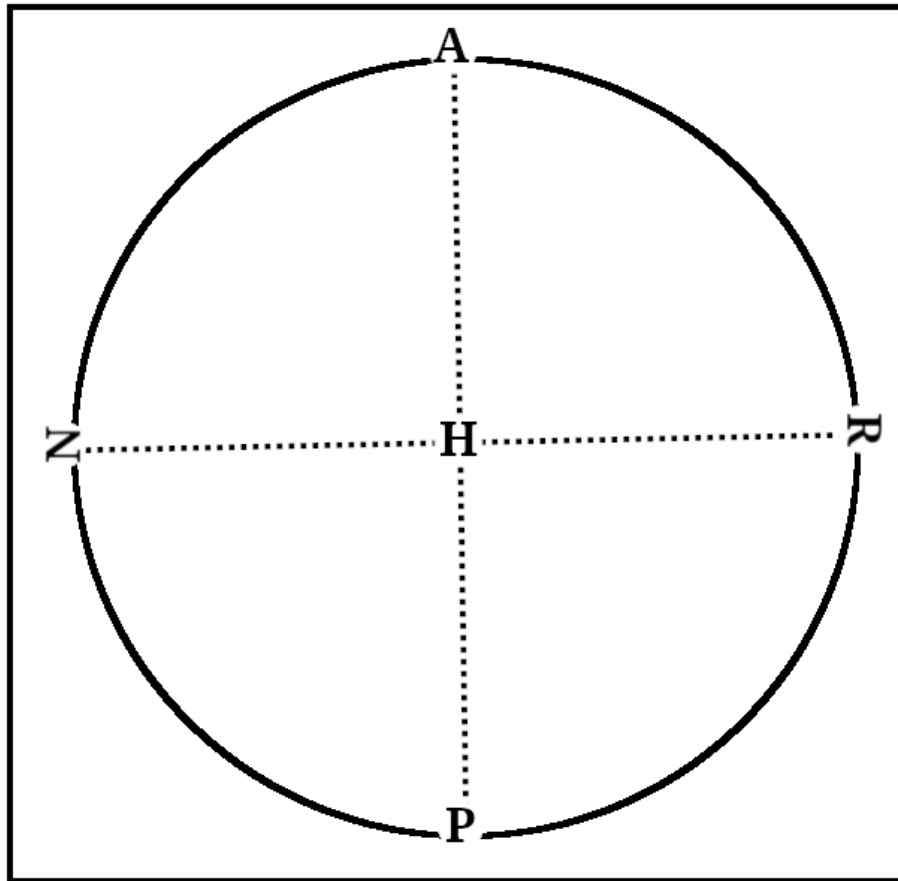
81 *desvios*

82 *cuchillada*

Here there is no difficulty, since it is clearly seen that the one at point A would be beaten by the one at point B, due to having two parts less path to travel; that one will be beaten by the one at point C, since he has another two parts less path; and that one will be beaten by the one that goes on whichever half circle, due to being half of that path. As such, if your opponent would want to enter, traveling on the line of the diameter from the last demonstration, making that greater circular movement with the sword, considering that that voyage that it makes is so long that, in making use of the beginning of that movement and giving a curved step on the circumference to the right side, with only the movement of the wrist, having the arm straight, you will defeat them and arrive first, without being in danger. Without any doubt, this argument is solid, so that you understand that all those propositions or techniques that are composed of less and shorter movements are better, since they will arrive more quickly. As we have said, these demonstrations are advantageous for gaining knowledge and disposition so that later, when we say that the circular movement that is formed with the whole arm, whether on the left or the right, that one makes use of the beginning of said movement with the half circle that the wrist makes, and the side of the circumference or the angle what will suit and is opposite to the one that the opponent will use.

Because of the inherent inequality that there is between the movements of the arms and the feet, you will be free of the strikes that they will form against you, and you will injure them with yours. So that you understand it without it being necessary to repeat it again many times, it is suitable that you study these first demonstrations until you have understood their terms, senses, applications, causes, and effects; these are the fundamental principles that are your defense and the offense of the opponent who will want to injure you, without which it will be impossible for you to have an understanding of that which you desire, nor security in any point that you would find in *destreza*, which you justly seek.

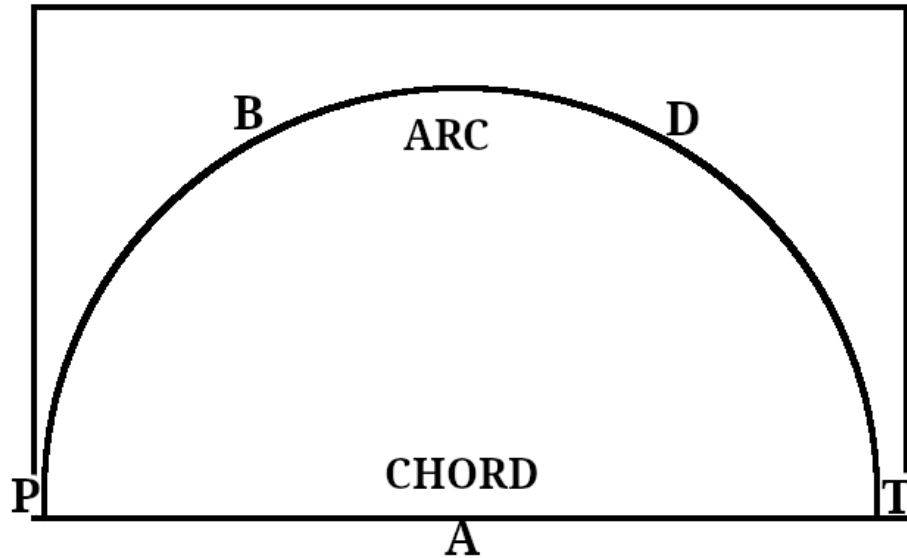
Three different strikes, whose names are:
whole circle, half circle, and quarter circle.



THE imposition of the names with which we name things is nothing other than a measure with which we briefly deal with their significance, in order to better understand and know them. Since Marcus Tullius says that new things have to be treated with new words, we will have to make use of one and the other for the present demonstration; because examples make greater proofs, and it is useful for our credit, the sense that something contains in itself will be understood more easily by means of examples. The name that we will give a thing will be according to its shape and form. As it is a round circle, with the beginning joined to the end, we will call it the whole circle, and whichever part of the two that are divided by the line that point A and P show, which is the middle, we call it the half circle.

Because the other line from point N to point R divides each half into two parts, all come to be four; each one of these we call the quarter part of the circle. This being supposed, we make the same consideration as in the previous demonstration, that if two people, one placed in point A and another in P, have left in order to return by the circumference to point A – which one would arrive first? The doubt is resolved, since anyone will judge it to be the one at point P, due to having half of the path. If the one at point A wanted to come to point P by way of the circumference toward point R, and the one who was on P departed to come to point N, it is certain that they will arrive first, since they travel half the path, and will always have the advantage because the whole is more than its part. So understand that in *destreza* three strikes are formed according to this demonstration. The two positioned straight or curved, the point of the sword is in front of the opponent's chest, one travels from there on the circumference to the left, and the sword below the opponent's, and gives a strike in the chest, which is where the movement began; because it finished where it began, we call it a whole circle. The remedy of this is to travel on the left side of the circumference, giving a strike below the right arm, which forms a half circle there. Because each one has to make a demonstration in particular, and it will be restricted to this, by now it is enough to understand that the strike that will travel on the shortest path and with least movement will arrive first, as we already demonstrated in the demonstration of the three circles before this, since the sense of both is the same, and that is the intent that should be understood.

Demonstration of the arc and the chord, in which the nature of the circular and straight movement is manifest.



OF the most important precepts of the true *destreza*, the one of most consideration, in which is founded the solidity of the defense of a person, which promises safety and will deliver victory, which makes a *diestro* composed and lord of the movements that can be done to injure, is understanding and remembering the sense of this demonstration. Our author praises it in various places (as it is so important), in particular in the first dialogue where he presents a problem, saying that if two lines (or swords) were moved at the same time, one on the arc and the other on the chord, which would finish its path first?

He responds that the one that will finish and arrive with more quickness to the determined place is either from the execution of the movement that will be done by means of the sagitta (which will be declared in the demonstrations of the universal) or that which is done on the chord, without any contradiction, as there is no encounter between them which impedes the action, because it is a manifest thing in arms, whatever species they may be, for the circular movement to be contrary to the straight, and the straight to the circular. Due to this, the two swords being equally distant from the center, the one on the arc, which is the circular movement, and the other on the chord, which is the straight movement, although they move at the same time, they will follow unequal species of lines, even though the circular movement may be done with much speed. This is confirmed by much experience, earned with some work and study to come to a conclusion for *destreza* that the line that has a shorter path to travel arrives to the point that the mover indicates before the one that has a longer path, as long as the mean is available, as will be said in some parts of this book. We come to the manifestation of the demonstration, in which the figure is similar to the arc and chord of a crossbow, and as it appears that the curved line makes a half circle, which Carranza calls the arc, and the straight line which touches the two ends of it is the chord. Considering the two movements on the two lines that we have said, each one following its path, it will be seen that the line that will make its path on the arc has one-third more path (or voyage) to travel, as seen by dividing it into three equal parts: the one from point P to point B, the other from B to point D, and the last from D to T.⁸³

83 The original says B to T, but clearly meant D to T.

The movement made on the chord will be shorter than one made on the arc.

The *diestro* notes.

The *tajo* and *revés* each necessarily have to consist of four movements, participating in two angles.

That which went on the chord will have one-third less path to travel due to not having to go more than two parts: from point P to point A and from there to T, all being equal to the first ones from the arc. Thus, the chord is verified to be the shorter path, and in this, no reply can be given nor can anything negate it, because one who would be more curious will be able to take a step, and they will find it as certain as promised here. Manifesting it more clearly with its true application, you have to understand that whenever your opponent, whether having lines touching or not (I mean say that one who has your sword subjected or you have theirs), will want to wound with a circular movement, whether forming it with an attack⁸⁴ to the face in order to wound in the chest or below with a natural movement that was preceded by a violent motion (which is the means by which the attack is formed), or whether they will want to wound in the thighs from the right angle with only the natural movement, even though it is shorter, the strike will either be executed below the sword arm, or the opposite, being understood the same when they do the vulgar technique of inviting (as we will say later). Finally, all movement that will be formed circularly, that lowers from the right angle, is properly that which Carranza calls an arc, and against all those, the straight movement,⁸⁵ which he calls the chord, will undoubtedly defeat them, by being shorter as well as reaching more, as we will prove in the following demonstration. If the straight will have such advantage in the half circular movements, it will be much more in the fully circular movements such as the *tajos* and *reveses*, since they necessarily have to consist of four movements, without which it would be impossible to form them, together with participation in two angles: the first being acute and the other obtuse.

84 *acometimiento* has been translated as “attack” and refers to the beginning of an attack that ends with a different target or type of strike than how it began

85 *movimiento recto*

The first of the movements is the one with which it lowers from the right angle to the acute, which is the means by which the remiss movement is formed, which is when the sword parts to the left side, which is vulgarly called taking flight. Another is the violent which is engendered at the point that the remiss ends, rising from there with the particular force which has to be applied to it until placing the sword high, which is the obtuse angle, and where the violent movement ends and the natural begins, which is when it lowers for the execution. All of which we will declare in a preparation that has to be done to in order to enter into the universal. I do not say in all this that it is necessary that they precede the true effect of the wound, but in each one by itself. The straight movement will travel its path in such a short time that, with the other being done with much speed, it would not be able to conclude before the former is executed, because apart from our certain experience, Euclid says that the straight line is the shortest path from one point to another. With this, the chord and arc is understood well, and the promises that were given in its name at the beginning are true; there is no doubt, as in whichever circular movement, whether it is in potential or in action, whether *tajo*, *revés*, or thrust, the mean of proportion is always kept. Never forget this advice: they will be defeated, sometimes at the beginning of the violent movement, and others at the lowering of the natural, and even others at the beginning of the remiss, having the utmost caution in taking advantage of the most suitable sides of the circumference, according to the difference in the opponent's steps, always seeking inequality, as advised in the demonstration called the key and governor of *destreza*, because having inequality in steps, it will also be in the lines (or swords).

For example, having my opponent's sword subjected, if they want to form a *revés* that, as known in the *destreza* that we deal with, brings the sword close to the right side in the manner of those who scrape flax, as we will say in another part, the execution of this is in the right side of the head, and for this the step that will be given has to be on the left side of the circumference, or on the diameter when they want to execute it with greater cholera. At the point that the remiss movement begins, which is the time that it departs, if I want, letting my sword fall so close to their body, and theirs beginning such a long path, I will be able to wound them in the chest infallibly. When I will not want this, knowing the nature of the steps, which will be to said side, when the natural movement⁸⁶ lowers, I will be able to give a curved step on the other side of the circumference to my left side, without leaving at all from the right angle, extending my sword to the chest, and however rigorously they will want to injure me, they will be wounded with the same without me making any diligence other than positioning in right angle, wounding on the chord. The same is understood with the *tajo*, since knowing that it is formed on the opposite side, the step necessarily has to be so. So, the effects of *tajos* and *reveses*, being so rigorous, are not enough to injure one who will be in right angle and will want to wound on the chord.

86 *tiempo*

It can be understood that the attacks that will be made, even though they are very perfect, will be worthless by only having consideration and caution (as said) of the difference in the steps. Finally, I say that the movement of the strike, whether done with much speed or with great impetus and strength, with which they want to injure the *diestro*, cannot be considered to come to effect if you knew to position yourself upright with the inequality of the steps, without departing at all from right angle. To completely accredit this demonstration and the virtue that the right angle contains, I say that if there were not already a universal technique for all the movements with certainty and truth as known and experienced, that this would be it for all of them.

The great importance and value of the right angle.

If there were no universal, the right angle would be it.

Enhancing it (with much reason) by extraordinary mathematical demonstration, which can be very surprising, particularly to those who regularly carry long swords, believing that they reach farther with them, being the opposite (as we will prove). Considering that words alone will not be given the credit they deserve, due to believing more in that which is seen than that which is heard (like the rest), he wanted to place it in demonstration so that it is easier for you – also because Aristotle says that with two contrary things, one is the truth. Thus, so that you come to know the best posture in which you will reach farthest and be safest, it will be necessary to deal with that which reaches less, as the same Aristotle says that contrary things are better shown side-by-side. To be free from objections that they will be able to make, we will root this in four mathematical demonstrations: three from Euclid, and the other from Theodosius, philosopher and mathematician, whose propositions we will give to the letter. As Theodosius says (as we have said in another place), in the middle of a sphere or circle there is a point which is called the center; from this, all the lines to the circumference are equal. Euclid says that if a straight line touches the circle, and from the touching line another straight line is drawn perpendicular where it touches, it will be the center of the circle. This line is that which is shown by points N and C, and is named the line of contingency or touching. In the same book, proposition 15 says that in the circle, the longest of all lines is the diameter, and the others closest to it. These words accredit and favor ours, as seen in the present demonstration.

This is rooted in four mathematical demonstrations.

Euclid, book 3, proposition 19.

Three angles
according to
Euclid, book 1,
propositions 11
and 12.

Carranza, fol.
177.

For greater understanding of this, Euclid says in his first book in propositions 11 and 12 that there are three angles, whose names are obtuse, right, and acute, and that the obtuse is greater than the right, and the right greater than the acute, and acute least of all. According to this, the line that point P shows is that which makes the obtuse angle, whose truth is shown as being the greatest of the three. The line that point T shows is that which makes the right angle, showing well that it is less than the first, and the line which point B shows is that which makes the acute angle, lesser than the other two. Of all three lines (although equal in length and leaving from the same point), that which is in the right angle is that which reaches more, as seen and was said with the authority of Euclid, proposition 15, that the diameter line (which is the straight sword) reaches more. Our author came to say these words, that the angle that reaches farther is the right, aside from being disposed to attend to whichever movement of the opponent, whatever species it is (as we proved in the declaration and demonstration of the chord and arc). Now, you have to consider that the line NC which touches the circle is the body of a person whom you will want to reach with the sword, and that if you position yourself in right angle, you will reach to their chest, as seen in the line at point T. But if you will will raise to point O (which is the obtuse angle, because in such movement, a round circle will necessarily be described), you will part your sword from the opponent's body the entire distance from point N to point P, and theirs will be able to injure you; if you raise more until reaching point R, you will reach them much less, as also manifest in the distance that there is to point N, and if you arrive to point Q, you will have the sword perpendicular and straight to your head, and as far as manifested in the lines and letters.

On the contrary, if you will lower the sword to point B, which is where the acute angle is formed, you will cease reaching the opponent's body by all that which is lacking up to point C. If you will lower to point D, the sword would be with the point on the ground and much more distant. If you would place it at point E, you would have it directly next to your body. From this, it can clearly be seen that positioning in obtuse or acute angle, you will reach one-third less than if you were in right angle, as manifest by the line PB, which touches the points of both swords. If you would place it higher, coming to point R, or so low that it comes to point D, you would reach three-fifths less than in the right angle, as shown by the line RD, which also touches on the extremes of the lines, as the curious will be able to see with a compass. Since we have proven with such certainty and infallible demonstration that the right angle is the best posture (leaving aside that which Geronimo de Carranza says, that positioning oneself is not the essence of *destreza*) you always want to be positioned upright, choosing the point of the sword at the opponent's chest, straightening it according to their movements, because positioning in this angle is like the north wind which, being the axis around which the celestial machine is moved, one uses to navigate to all places, like wind in general. Thus, positioned in this angle, you will be able to attend to any movement, whichever species it may be.

Positioned in obtuse or acute angle, one reaches one-third less than in right angle.

In which angle the *diestro* has to be positioned.

Proof and
conclusion that
Carranza says.

In conclusion of that which our author says, that the shorter line reaches more, this can be seen in one in right angle, since having length equal to the others shown in the obtuse and acute angles, it reaches one-third more; when one would have somewhat less length, disposition and length would remain for having the same effect of reaching farther. But you know that the greater reaches less by having the feet disproportionately open, and the body very extended, as seen when they position themselves, which seems to them that with that, they have to reach farther, though the opposite happens. So these demonstrations make an epilogue in your memory, saying that the feet proportionally together is the best posture, most firm and secure of all the others, the body upright, proper, this being more restful and quicker to attend to whichever movement of the opponent with the speed required, to delay it, as well as to form the parry, deviation, or strike. The sword and arm straight, which (as Geronimo de Carranza says) is how the forces are made, which in easiest terms by example is when someone wants to show that they have great arm strength, and makes bets that they can't force it to reach their chest, then they extend with great force, because if the elbow was not straight, the arm would easily be bent, making the hand touch the chest. In conclusion, the arm has to be positioned straight, without forcing it to be fingernails down or up, because according to our author, they are extremes, but being on edge is the restful posture. Finally, nothing has to be done with violence, nor bending the arm in order to give the strike, which is what they commonly do when they throw their punching thrusts, appearing to them that by bending the arm and returning to extend with great force, they have to reach more.

How the arm
has to be
positioned.

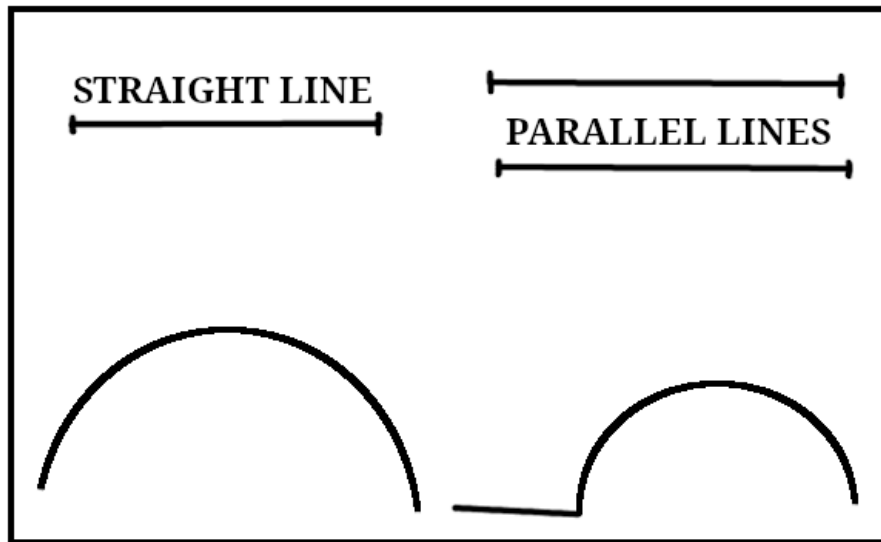
Being deceived in that, rather, that movement is superfluous, and harm will be able to follow it, because at the point that the arm is withdrawn, the sword shortens; whenever the arm is bent, the opponent's sword will be able to reach and injure at that point, as we will say in its place. All that said has to serve you as general advice, so that whatever strike, and whatever species that it is, whether it will participate in obtuse or acute angle, you understand that the right angle (the mean of proportion having been chosen) will be superior and always victorious, by being one-third greater, even though the swords are equal in length. With this consideration and knowledge, having the caution that is required, it will be impossible to be wounded, even though your opponent seeks it through many paths, being, as it will be, in your hand to injure them when you want, how you want, and with the strike that you most want. But to come to this perfection, it is suitable for me to caution you to conform in this with that maxim of Tullius, in the first De Officiis, that all things have to be thought about diligently before beginning to do them, so that they have a good end. If you will find some opinion to the contrary of that which we prove in this demonstration, maintaining their opinion as good, and this truth being experienced as not certain, it does not alter or disgruntle you, since as Rabbi Moysen,⁸⁸ a great doctor, says in his practice: that which the simple think is bad, truly is good, and what they believe is good, truly is bad, due to the little knowledge they have; with this, there will be nothing that alters or upsets them, since truth and experience smooths all these difficulties.

Note.

Tullius, first De Officiis.

⁸⁸ Moses ben Maimon, also known as Maimonides

Four lines that serve particularly in *destreza* for strikes as well as for steps.



Curved line

Mixed line

A servant of the king *Don* Alonzo of Aragon asked him which was worth more: books or arms? He responded: through books, I learned arms and their rights. This response suits our purpose; we not only say the same, but it helps us when words are confirmed with works. Since we have taken advantage of books in order to understand arms and their rights, which is the demonstration through cause, which is a manner to gain an understanding of the true knowledge of the known cause, for the knowledge of the unknown effect, being as it is certain in *destreza* that the line that has less to travel and a shorter path will arrive first.

Also, when two lines depart from equal points and travel equal paths and with equal movement, without one meeting the other, they will arrive at the same time and have equal effects. The books where we will better find that which is necessary for it and lays out that which we deal with, are those of Euclid. Because it is important to us to have much knowledge of the four lines that we have shown in order to be able to proceed scientifically in defense and offense, their definitions taken from said author, we will refer to them only because the application of each one has to be manifested in its proper place. Because we deal with lines, it has to be understood firstly that some lines are simple and others are mixed; the simple are the straight and circular, although the straight are simpler. Euclid says that the straight line, being that which can most briefly be drawn from one point to another, is a brief extension from point to point, and is the shortest path that can be traveled. Thus, the straight movement is that which is done from one place to another directly on the straight line, and it will be superior to the rest in brevity as well as in execution. From the straight lines come the parallel lines, which are the second that we demonstrate, which Euclid says by his definition: parallel lines, however distant, are those that, proceeding infinitely, never meet; and in his third book: parallel lines are those that, in the same plane, extended in both directions, never meet. In ordinary *destreza*, this is when two opponents who are fighting (or as they say, fencing or playing) throw two punching thrusts on the straight line of the diameter, beginning and finishing at the same time, each one executing it in the left side of the opponent.

Euclid, books 1
and 3.

Because they don't meet there (which is the same as one line not meeting another), they become parallel lines. In the true *destreza*, according to Geronimo de Carranza, it is when both swords make thrusts along the circumference of the steps.

What the
curved line is.

The curved line is that which is crooked or takes a longer path, according to what Euclid says in his book. Thus the curved movement is that which is done from one place to another in a curved fashion, along the curved line; it will necessarily be slower than the straight, due to that part of its path that it has more than the straight. Because a particular demonstration was made from this (which we called the chord and arc), it will not be here so as to not lengthen this, since it is advised and proven there.

The mixed line
is composed of
straight and
curved lines.

The mixed line is that which is composed partially straight and partially curved, as seen in its demonstration; the step that will be given on it, and the movement that will be done along it, will also be partially straight and partially curved. By now it isn't necessary to declare more, because as we have said each one of these demonstrations will be called out in their place, and their definitions referred to. It is only necessary to be advised that when one will give a straight step and straight strike, the step has to be on the straight line, and the strike has to be in the right angle. When we say that one has to wound in parallel lines, it is understood at what distances the swords have to remain by virtue of the steps. When it should be the curved step, the movement and the curved strike are known to have to be on the curved line.

Ultimately, when it will be advised that the step, as well as the movement for the strike, should be mixed, it is known that it has to be as shown by the mixed line, which has to begin straight and end circular. With this, you will be better and more quickly able to attend to whatever point of *destreza*, in order to understand it, as well as work it and show it to others.

Through the opinion of all the philosophers, we are certain that there is no science that deals with particulars, due to being such that they cannot be considered, and being inherently weak and variable, whose effects can be or not be according to their distances, time, and quality, and the many impediments that can be placed at each step (as they are), where they come to be knowingly doubtful and uncertain. Little confidence can be had in these, because in lacking the certainty of the cause, the effect will not be true. Since it is certain that that which is founded on false foundations has a property such that the more one looks, the more defects are found, and greater imperfections are discovered, and in this matter of arms, more danger comes with it. There are some things in it that, although they are bad in themselves, the harm that follows is much greater, but because ordinary *destreza* is composed of them and is founded on that which cannot be good, one will never be able to find the stability, firmness, nor perpetuity to enjoy the grandiose title of certainty and truth; its causes and effects will become accidental, often times lacking.

The particulars are doubtful and uncertain.

Why the ordinary *destreza* is bad.

The vulgars
say that there
is Fortune in
arms.

Why the
heathens made
a temple to
Fate.

How *destreza*
has to begin.

If something is successful, it is chance, and this is neither due to its cause, nor due to that which does it, even though it is the instrumental mean for it, but by chance, which is how it is ordinarily said when one arquebusier or another shoots, the target is struck once, and many times it is missed, and the first time that it hit, it was not because it was a good arquebusier, but that since it had to go some place, it went to the target. From this comes the veneration of Fortune as the universal lady of arms, and revering her as such, affirming that what she will want necessarily has to happen. This is so general (it seems to me) that if our holy christian religion would not defend them, they would make a temple where they will worship her, as the heathens did for Fate, of whom they were certain and swore that everything was subject to it and necessarily had to happen as determined by it. This has passed from person to person, such that the rustic villager, in dealing with arms, laughs and mocks, saying that all is chance, and that all is done as Fortune wants. It is a great shame and utmost confusion that they don't consider how little harm that Fortune, Fate, or Chance can do to one who places more confidence in the certainty of science than in happenstance. *Destreza* has to begin founded on science, long experience, and working it with much prudence and great consideration, since its effects change many times according to the age of the opponent, their complexion, the time, the place, and many other causes. Due to this, it suits one to exercise it with true knowledge of all this, because a person who threw themselves into fire would not leave it to chance whether they would burn or not, knowing that its own effect is to burn.

This does not come through chance or happenstance, but naturally, such that it would either cease being fire (which is impossible) or it will make its effect, which is to burn. Thus, for one who will throw themselves in the danger of the ordinary *destreza*, which truly doesn't consist of any certainty, trusting in chance, it would be impossible to have success. This is what is well-advised by Vegetius, in *De Re Militari*, that one who will want to reach a successful outcome in battle does not begin it by chance, but by art and science, because there is nothing as secure as that which is founded on reason, and on the other hand nothing so wretched as that which is guided by fate and chance. Since error and carelessness done in battle receives no amendment or correction, but rather harm and punishment comes at the same point that it is done and is paid immediately, without giving time nor even allowing repentance. On the contrary, that which has order and is founded on and governed by it will have the utmost success, because there is nothing in the world that can truly be called perpetual except that which is founded on truth and reason. They should understand that knowledge is a possession that no force can take away, but lacking it when they will consider this, there wouldn't have been anything to write. I would go so far as to say that one will lack nothing by knowing, but many times people love that which they should abhor, and abhor that which they should love with great affection. Considering this, I will give you a demonstration of the most common techniques used by those that deal with the ordinary *destreza*, in which they place their confidence, and the remedies and defense with which you have to free yourselves.

Vegetius, *De Rei Militari*, advises not to begin battle by chance, but by art and science.

Carelessness in battle brings danger.

Why one has
to know the
false *destreza*.

Why the
particulars
have to be
known, though
not certain.

The two
destrezas
together will
understood
better.

It should not seem to you that I want you to work it due to this, but so that you know the bad in order to avoid the danger and harm that your eyes show you, as this is the only reason it is advantageous to know it. Then, I will give the most essential particulars of the true *destreza* (as promised) with this limitation: the former are not certain, but doubtful and false as we have said, and the latter are not infallible, but better than the former due to who does them, as well as the parts, causes, means, and distances with which they are worked. I mean to say that knowing them is necessary for knowledge of the universal – not because the universal is due to them, but in order to be more agile and disposed for it. Besides, the *diestro* does not have to go with the universal in each moment and with whichever person as if they were whichever ordinary particular; rather, they have to follow the style of one who sells jewels, who gives stones, rubies, and topazes to the illustrious and serious people, and gold and silver to the median, and alchemy and lead to the plebeian and rustic. That is to say that there will be people with whom you will need the finest stone of the universal in order to defend yourself, and others with whom whichever particular that you do, your *destreza* would be more than enough. One will deal with all like this, because it is good to know all, and in this, passing into the superfluous is better than lacking what is necessary. Since a general overview of this must be done, taking the secrets of both *destrezas* public, placing them together so that it is seen which is which, and knowledge of one comes through comparing with its contrary. Due to the long experience I have of the truth, and its value, gravity, strengths, and greatness, I dare to affirm that one has to root out the ordinary and false.

To those that have professed it to this day, I advise them and even beg them with a thousand pleas, to decide to leave it, as such a harmful thing, following the opinion of the philosopher Antistenes, who says that the most perfect doctrine that a person can learn is to forget what is known unless it is certain and true. Since it will be clear to them, with such disillusionment, it will be just for them to regard it as a thing of little importance, and harmful rather than advantageous. From here forward, for one who would be so reckless that they would relapse to the past, and find danger of their own free will, it will be just wages that against their will they suffer the punishment and perish from it.

That which
should be done
to those who
profess the
ordinary
destreza.

That which has to be advised in order to better understand this book.

SUPPOSING that our author, in the third dialogue of his book, proved with well-founded reason that the sword has more and less strength along its length, graduating from the point to the hilt with numbers from 1 to 10, with this it is understood that the value of a number corresponds to its strength or weakness (as will be dealt with in the universal). And in this, no one has had doubts in understanding that the point of the sword is the weakest part and where there is the least strength, and because of this, it is called the weak. The hilt, which is where the greatest number is, closest to the center (which is where the arm comes from and communicates strength), is also named the strong.

Carranza, fol.
178 and 179.

Carranza, fol.
157.

It is now enough to understand that the point of the sword is the weakest part of all, and the hilt is the strongest. Since these two names, weak and strong, originate from their own being, considering that they have to be distinct and separate from each other, as Aristotle says: two opposites cannot exist together, such as fire and ice; in the same way, there cannot be strong and weak at the same point. So if the weak of the opponent's sword came to the strong of yours, there is no doubt that you would be victorious, and the same if they made a movement for some strike, because such will also be weak, as also affirmed in the same dialogue, with two examples that verify this truth. The one is wrestling, in which he says that when one is wrestling, if their opponent gives a turn, in which they have placed all their strength, at the point that it ends, before they bring themselves back or do it again to give another, bringing together the beginning of the one with the end of the other, they would be able to be thrown down. The second example is when they want to bring down a bull, so that it can be done easily, they wait until it lifts some of its feet, because in that movement, due to only being on two feet, it is weak, and pressing the lance against it, they will knock it down. In this way, we say that if the opponent will make a movement to wound, because they necessarily have to lift the feet to move the body, arm, and sword, they will be weak, and that applying the strong, they will also be defeated. It is important for you to have much consideration of this advice in order to understand it, as well as to avoid it.

It is known that the body of a person is where the propositions or techniques are directed, and by avoiding the prolixity of making a person for each strike, we suppose that the small circle that we place in each demonstration is the body to where the strikes have to travel, as demonstrated in each one of them. It is not unreasonable to manifest or suppose it in this round figure, since a person is circular and, according to Aristotle and the other philosophers, has a spherical figure; because of this, it is good that we place it in the proper spherical figure.

What the small circle in each demonstration signifies.

The lines, curved as well as straight, that are placed are the path on which one has to go in order to execute the strikes, on one side or the other, according to what they will manifest, sometimes long and others short, and in the occasions that it will be suitable to make use of the left foot, it will also be advised.

The lines are the paths on which the *diestro* has to travel.

The letters that are placed that say right foot and left foot are to signify where the step has to be given; keeping this in mind, point A shows where you have to be positioned first, which is the place where you choose the mean of proportion, which is the first thing you have to do, and in habituating yourself to do, you will come to make such a habit that without any diligence, you will know the distance there will be between you and your opponent.

What the letters in the demonstration are for.

The other letters are the movements that follow, manifesting where one has to give the step, and in what form the strike has to be given, because each one has its determined place.

The intent of making a demonstration and showing in it the most ordinary movements that can happen is so that, having formed some proposition, you see where your opponent can move, almost necessarily, and in making some movement, how you have to impede and injure them.

The *diestro* notes what is important.

So that it is not necessary to bother you each moment with something, I advised that whenever your opponent positions themselves with the sword high, which will participate in the obtuse angle, or low, which is in the acute angle, or to the sides in some of the extremes, that you position yourself in right angle and you will reach them more, as already proven, choosing a convenient mean. This is with the caution that if your opponent has the sword and arm withdrawn, then you have to choose the mean of proportion as if they were straight; knowing the distance for this is such an important thing to know to work with certainty. If one were caught not observing this precaution and mean, then when they would come to extend the arm, finding you close, you would not leave without some injury. At least at the beginning it will be advantageous to you and even of utmost importance to go with this caution, until you have full knowledge of the movements and their parts, as we will say in the promised book, and method of the French positioning themselves, which is entirely different from the Spanish, due to having the left foot ahead, the right arm and sword withdrawn, and the left arm and dagger extended, with the points of the sword and dagger together and equal.

The French position themselves differently from the Spanish.

The second dialogue of the book of our author, which deals with the false *destreza*, encloses by way of objections the most essential parts against it;

so that you see the one and understand the other, I will give account where it will be necessary.

Finally, I want you to understand that the purpose of placing *destreza* in demonstrations is so that you proceed with more knowledge. As Carranza says, the demonstration by cause is the manner of proceeding; the understanding of the true knowledge of the cause being known goes to the knowledge of the effect. Because the primary role of the *diestro* is to know and then to fabricate in the understanding what has to be done, you do all this by means of the demonstration in which your opponent will be placed. With this, it will advise you how the effect has to be achieved, because it is impossible to give a known effect from an unknown cause, since the effect is by means of the cause, and not the opposite. We do not deal with the remote or distant cause, because the effect necessarily has to be so, and it will not be able to come to be unless it is by means of another primary cause, as for example: the application of some medicine to some sickness will be the cause of healing it, but the medicine is a league from the sick person; here the primary cause has to enter, which is to go to them, then the second, which is to take it so that the effect is achieved. Applying it to *destreza*, I say that my opponent being placed in some demonstration, I have some strike shown and known, which is the effect of that cause, but they are distant from me such that I cannot reach them; this is the remote cause, and the primary cause will be necessary, which is bringing myself to them, so that the effect is achieved. All this is made plain by the proportionate mean, which is the determined distance that each species of strike has, in all arms, as we will always manifest due to being the key and governor of *destreza*, as our author says.

What is demonstration by cause, Carranza fol. 35.

Remote cause, the effect is the same.

Important declaration on what is a strike,
what it is composed of, and which are the
strikes before time, in time, and after time.

THAT most-excellent master of eloquence, Marcus Tullius Cicero, counsels and even gives as a precept of utmost importance that when one has to deal with something, one first begins with its definition in order to better understand it. The logicians have this as an infallible rule, confessing it to be best. It is in accordance with nature to say the thing before defining it, in order to avoid the mistake; it suits us to obey this precept, in order to succeed in what we deal with. Since we have to deal with strikes, it will be reasonable to declare and define what a strike is, what its cause is, what it is composed of, and how many differences there are in the strikes; not insofar as themselves, but in the causes, from which they are the effects, so that with more evidence we know the material that we deal with, as well as for your greater tranquility, because it is certain that that which is unknown (as for the imagination) is greater than which is truly known. The strike is composed and formed of three parts, which are: time, in which all things are done (with the opposite being impossible), movement, which is done in this time, and the effect, which is the wound. It will not be necessary to deal with each thing at one point, to accord with our principal foundation.

What the strike
is composed
of.

Beginning with time as the precedent of all things, according to Aristotle it is a measure of movement and stillness. The endpoints of which are two instants, and an instant is that which has no parts, because the point in which it begins is as brief as the most delicate point, making it impossible to have parts; the space in which it happens is what we call time, and the end in which it finishes is also a point. Finally, time is that in which we do whatever work, and the instants are the two points in which it begins and ends. This authority that time is measured from movement is so certain that we don't have to tire ourselves in seeking others, nor examples to prove it, since there are none who ignore that nothing can be done without time. So, this is enough and satisfies us, and at the same time shows us that movement has to be worked in time, and in no other manner. Finally, both things have to be declared from one path. Movement, in this matter, is a concept of the spirit and deliberation of the will, because the impetus of the spirit is the beginning of actions; an action of that which is in potential is a transmutation from one place to another, done in time. Now one has to advise that neither the sword nor the other arms move by themselves because, as the mathematicians say, surfaces and lines don't extend, turn, or move themselves, because they are incorporeal; they are extended, turned, and moved together with the bodies, as they are the extremes and ends of those bodies.

What is time.

What is an instant.

Time is measured from movement.

What is movement.

The sword doesn't move itself, nor the lines or surfaces.

There is no strike without movement.	Thus the line which we call sword doesn't move by itself, but together with a person's body and arm, which is its motor. In this manner, it is proven that time is necessary for the movement of the sword, and the body and arm are necessary for this movement to be done, and in no other manner. Now we have to understand that the strike is formed and composed of movements, without which it will be impossible for any to be formed, nor could the opponent be injured, because according to the natural philosophers, nothing comes from nothing; the strike is because of the movement, and not the movement because of the strike, just as it is the effect due to the cause, and not the cause due to the effect. It can be understood to be necessary that there is movement so that there is a strike, and in no other manner.
Contrary effects originate from contrary causes.	Now in order to conclude our purpose, it suits you to understand that the contrariness and difference of the effects consists and is due to the contrariness and difference of the causes. As the movements are the cause of the strikes, and these are diverse, those will also have to be. Since we deal with science, which is a knowledge of a thing by its cause according to what we proved in the prologue (by its proper and true definition), in order to know the strikes it suits us to know the movements of which they are composed, which are the causes.
What are cardinal movements?	According to Carranza and what certain and long experience has shown us, there are four, which we call cardinal movements, whose names are violent movement, natural movement, remiss movement, and mixed movement, from which different effects originate and are produced, according to the company that one makes with the other, and also the time with which they all form the strike.

Because we later have to make a particular declaration of all those, this point will remain here, but you have to know that strikes of first intention are formed with these movements, which are done without parry or attack. Strikes of second intention are also formed, which are composed from the opponent's movements; circular strikes are also formed from these movements, which are the *tajo* and *revés*. Apart from these three genera, there are three other differences in strikes, which are those that we intend to declare, and in what respect this point was made; their names are strike before time, strike in time, and strike after time. The strike before time is that which we call first intention, and it is not called before time because it can be done before its own time, since we have proved that time is measured from movement, and movement causes the strike, but because it is done before the time in which the opponent begins to work their proposition or technique to injure or defend themselves; its liberty is such that it is without parry or attack. The strike in time is that which is done at the beginning of some strike that the opponent begins of their own free will, or the *diestro* having obligated them, which we call second intention. In a manner that, having obligated them to a proposition, narrowing them and obligating them to it, if they will make some movement at the beginning of it they have to be wounded.

Why it's called a strike before time.

What is a strike in time.

Why it is called
a strike after
time.

Because this strike works in the same time that the movement is done, it is called a strike in time. Another example is when the opponent forms a circular strike of *tajo* or *revés* – for its effect (as you will know later), four movements have to proceed; at the beginning when they form the violent or remiss, they will be wounded with a sagitta thrust, or with some *revés* at the beginning of the *tajo*, or with some *tajo* at the beginning of the *revés*, or *revés* against *revés*, or *tajo* against *tajo* (as will all be shown in demonstration), insofar as this strike or strikes are worked in the time that they work theirs, it acquires and is given this name, and we call it a strike in time. The strike after time (not because anything can be done before or after it) is when the opponent forms a strike, which is impeded with the *atajo* (which we call universal) killing the movement of which it is composed before it comes to its effect, and after that, we wound them. It is because that time in which the movements for the strike were done has passed, since by having killed the movement, the time in which it was formed ended, and because of that we call it a strike after time. All this said, you have to understand and be advised that in the discourse of this book, when you hear the term strike before time, it is any strike in first intention. When you are advised that the strike is in time, it has to be when your opponent will make some movement, whether circular for *tajo* or *revés*, or accidental straight for a thrust, before such movement is finished.

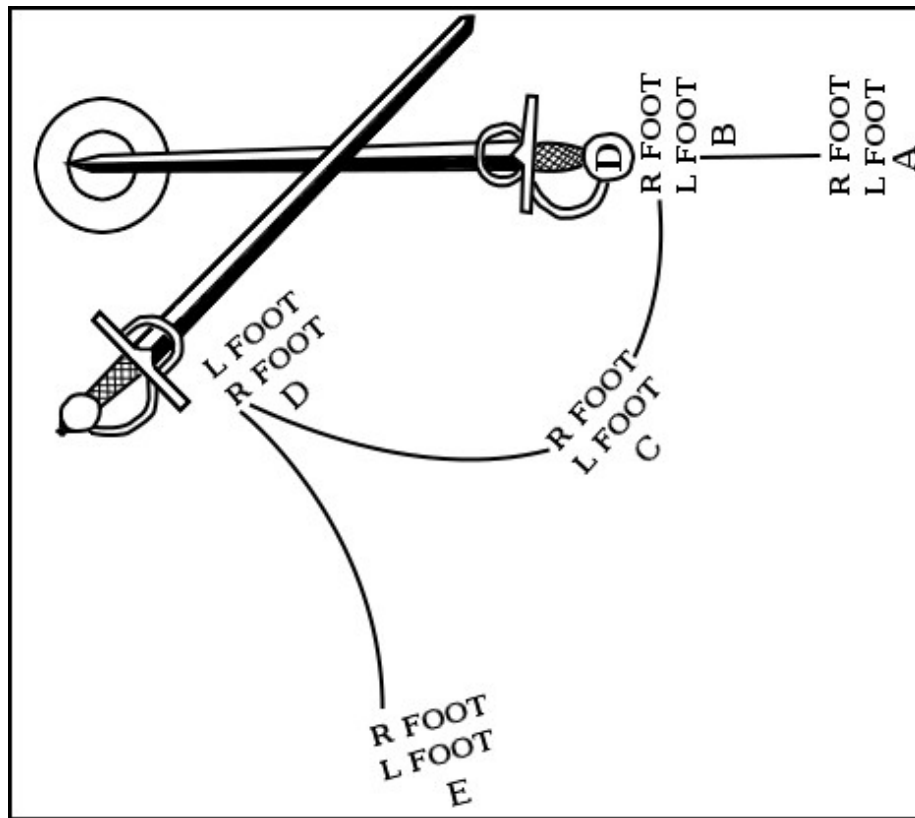
When it seems suitable to make the strike after time, this is known in *destreza* to be executed after all the movements that the opponent would make for their strike have passed, of whichever genus they are. With this, that which is suitable for the knowledge of *destreza* as well as for your stillness is advised, since with this we leave certain and true notice that there is not, nor can there be, any strike without movement, nor movement without time, nor time without another equal time in which you can defend or injure if you want, and with this we conclude this second part. Because we always have to have it as a theme of this treatise, it suits you to study in particular that which we must make use of in different cases in each one of these demonstrations, due to being fundamentals of this true *destreza* that we deal with, until coming to such a habit in whatever point of it that you understand and work it easily.

THIRD PART,
IN WHICH THE MOST COMMON
TECHNIQUES OF THE COMMON AND
VULGAR

destreza and their poor foundation are manifest, and the
remedies against them.

WITH PARTICULAR
arguments from Commander Carranza, and much
important advice from the author, trained with much
study and confirmed by long experience.

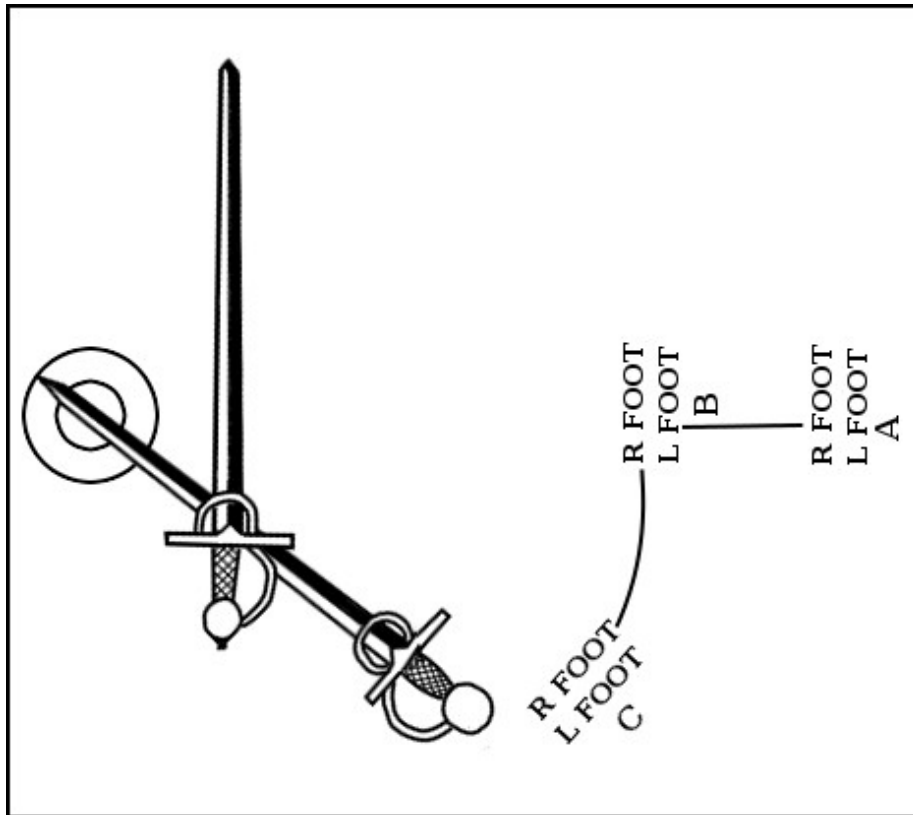
Against the common posture of the vulgar.



IT is and has been a commonly used manner among those that deal in the ordinary *destreza* to be positioned with the arm curved, made all angles; that is, bending the joint of the elbow, the hilt of the sword drawn close to the right thigh, and the point high, which they call iron gate. The feet are disproportionately open, weighted on the left foot, not considering that with all that which is withdrawn – the arm and the sword – in such posture, they cease reaching their opponent.

Besides being in a finalized posture (which is the same as being in an extreme) having killed off all of the strength, when the opponent's sword was much shorter than theirs, it will reach much more, as seen in this demonstration, that it reaches less than the right angle for two reasons: one because of the extreme of the arm, which lowers almost to the acute angle, and the other because the point of the sword, in a certain form, is raised to the obtuse angle. As we have proven that the right angle has more reach, having chosen the mean of proportion (which you have to choose before all things) which will be in point A, giving a forward step, you will give a strike in the chest, arriving at point B, with the strong of your sword coming near to the weak of theirs, without ever bending the arm, but always having it straight. This strike has to be done in such a manner that the movement of the body and execution of the strike have to arrive at one point, making the consonance of music. This strike is that which our author says, by way of objection in the second dialogue, that being in such a tired posture, the opponent bringing the sword close to the chest, one will be able to make them fall. But if they will instead be weighted on the right, the strike can be made much better, as he also says in the third dialogue, as their body will come much closer to your sword, theirs not reaching more by that, and you will be able to wound them with less movement. So in such posture, the sword shortens, and the body nears for its greater harm, which they will not be able to remedy.

When they will lift the sword, wound straight
below the right arm.



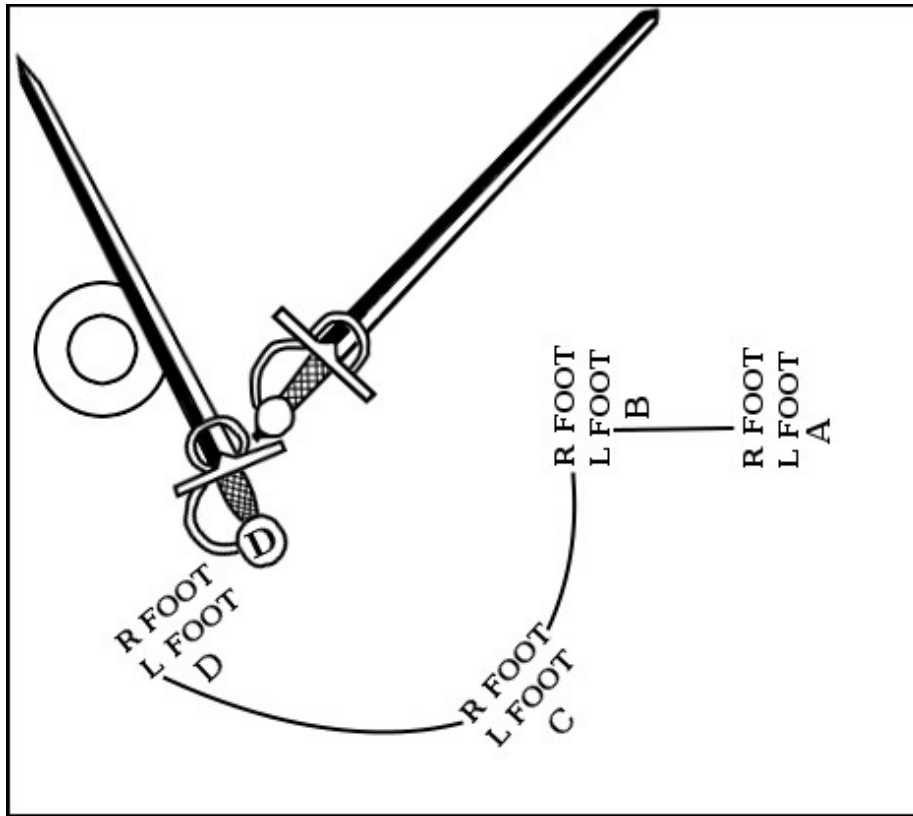
THERE is no person, however rustic they may be, nor even any irrational animal, that doesn't seek some defense and remedy for saving their life if they see that another goes to wound them. The more one seeks it, the more they know it. In order to execute this first strike, one travels and gives a forward step, and the execution is in the chest, because as they are so scared of the blows that are given in the face, they have great caution in guarding it; and even though they wound them in whichever other part, they don't put such caution in its remedy.

The remedy
they give to
this strike.

Two
movements
cannot be
made before
one.

The *diestro* will never fail to wound with the proposition that they will begin to form in the understanding, according to the demonstration that the opponent will give (which is the cause); because such branches and circumstances will depart due to the many impediments that the opponent may bring, one will not fail to come to some effect. This is the reason why the *diestro* has to know such techniques, in order to apply them according to the deviations that the opponent will make. That which can be done (and which they ordinarily do) to this strike is to lift the sword high, seeking to bring with it (with the guards) that which wants to wound them. In doing this, consider that it will be placed in obtuse angle, and even if it is seen well in the demonstration of the three angles, their sword will come to point R, which is where it reaches less than three-fifths than the right angle, as was proven in it. At the start of the violent movement, you will pass from point B to point C, giving a curved step and a strike below their right arm, seeking to free your sword so that they doesn't carry it with theirs. You will be able to give this strike because before the action of whatever movement which started is finished, which is violent, and they wants to put a remedy to the second strike, it will be with such delay that neither will they have time for it to be remedied, nor will you lack the time for wounding them, because two movements cannot be made before one. Take note that in wounding, you then have to leave to seek the mean of proportion, before the natural movement lowers. You always have to have this consideration when you will wound with the sagitta thrust, in order to attend to their movements.

If they beat the sword down, wound them
with a *revés*.



Take note that
the left foot has
to be put in at
point D

BECAUSE of the natural movement being in itself so noble that it is done without any work, lowering a heavy body to its center is very fast, almost incomprehensible, and can have more velocity if some force will be applied to it, your opponent will want to impede the previous blow by beating your sword down, or, as they say, pressing it to the floor. This is done by putting the quillons of their sword on the weak of the sword that goes to wound them. You will take note that the point of their sword will depart, removing it from the front of your body and leaving it remote to their left side.

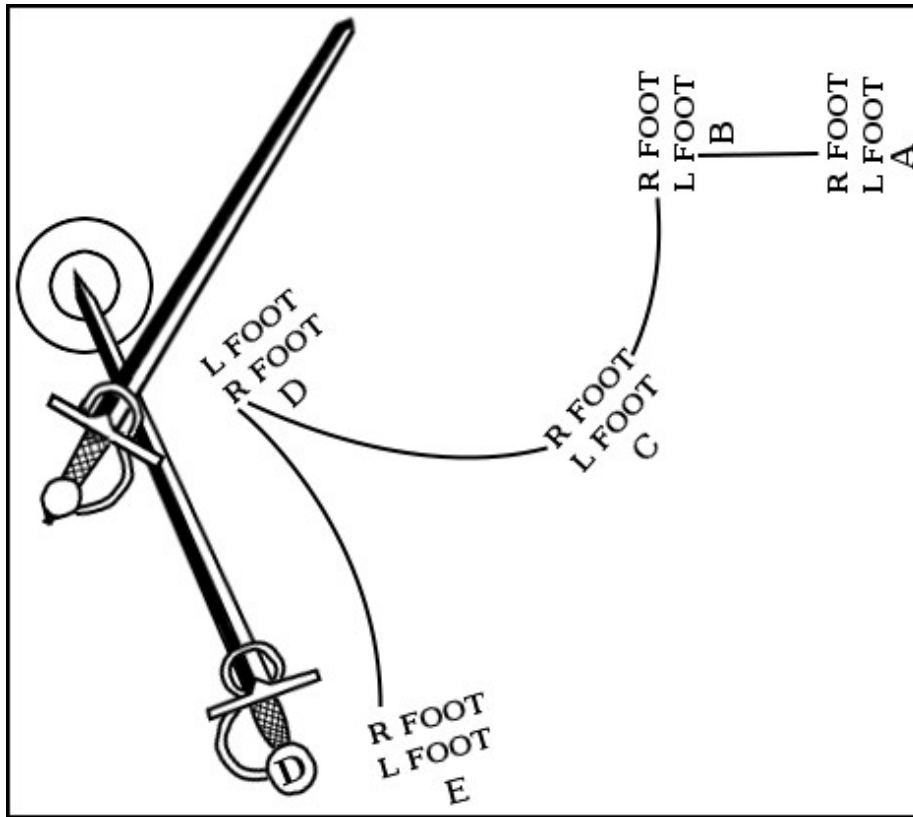
How the *revés*
is formed.

With this, you will be able to travel without any impediment, as the sword that would be able to impede is separate and so remote that before that impertinent movement can reduce to the middle, you will have already wounded, giving a step from point C (which was where the strike was impeded) to point D with left foot, with a *revés* in the head. As we have already said, that has to be formed in the manner of those who scrape flax, bringing the sword near to your right thigh, bending the hand, bringing the fingernails up, until the natural movement begins, that then it has to be on edge. In a certain way, it is in the manner that the *mandobles* take; they only differ in that they bend the middle arm (that is, the joint in the middle), which is called the crook of the elbow, and even many times only the wrist. In ours, the whole arm is moved with the biggest circle that can be made, because the steps of the feet supplement the quantity and distance that is required for the referred *revés*.

Another strike
of whole circle.

You would also be able, at the point that they will beat down your sword, likewise from point C, to free it from behind their quillons, giving a strike of whole circle in the chest without bending the arm, but only with the wrist, as we have already said. This name of whole circle is because the sword returns to the point where it started, and while the opponent will lower to the acute angle, you will be able to rise to the right angle, wounding in the chest.

If they will parry the *revés*, wound them with a thrust.



THERE is no movement among those already known to compose the blows that is so terrible to those that deal with the ordinary *destreza*, as are those that form the *tajo* and *revés*. There is no strike that they seek to parry with more diligence and caution, it being enough for defense in their opinion to cross the sword above the head.

The cause is not having true knowledge of the nature of the natural movement and also ignoring when, at what time, in what situation, and with what angle the parry has to be done, or if it is better to wound without a parry. Nor do they note that some circular techniques are different from others, not inasmuch as circles, but in the difference of their beginnings, because sometimes they are taken inside, others outside, some below, and others above. Nor do they take note that at the end of the *tajo* and *revés*, thrusts are formed, with the *diestro* only changing that particular intent, removing from the violent movement some parts of the force, and gaining the rest with the step. I am not mistaken in saying they don't know the nature of the movements, because in making the parry as they do, putting the sword above the head, which they call a rounded parry,⁸⁹ the arm is violent and without any strength. The strike of *tajo* or *revés*, besides lowering the sword naturally, seeking its center, is helped by the momentum of the force that is delivered. Finding the parry made with so little strength, the sword, arm, and head will come to meet without the parry being able to resist it, because the parries must not wait for the natural movement to lower, but leaving to meet it, as will be said in its place. Wanting to wound them with said *revés*, if they will form a rounded parry, you do not execute it over their sword. One will consider that, although they have guarded their head (in their view), they have uncovered their whole body. Passing to point E, making a half circle in the manner of a C, by not withdrawing your arm or meeting with their sword, you will give a strike below the right arm, taking note that the left foot has to start this movement, and the right has to continue it, as we have said.

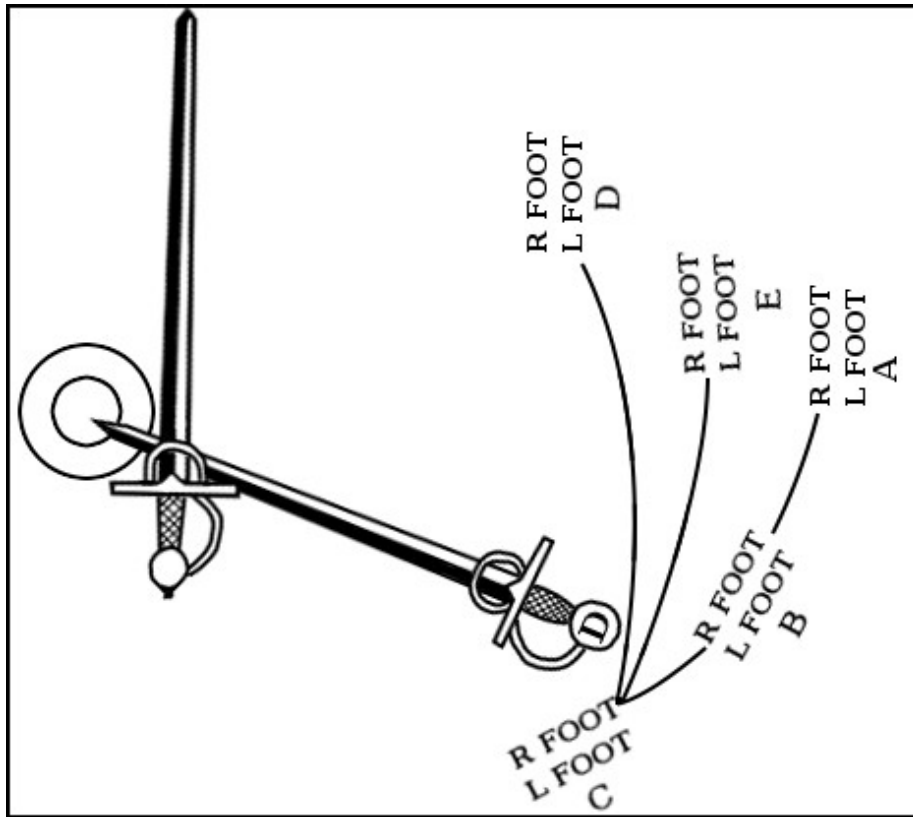
Thrusts are formed at the end of the *tajos*.

What is the rounded parry?

How the parry has to be done.

89 *reparo redondo*

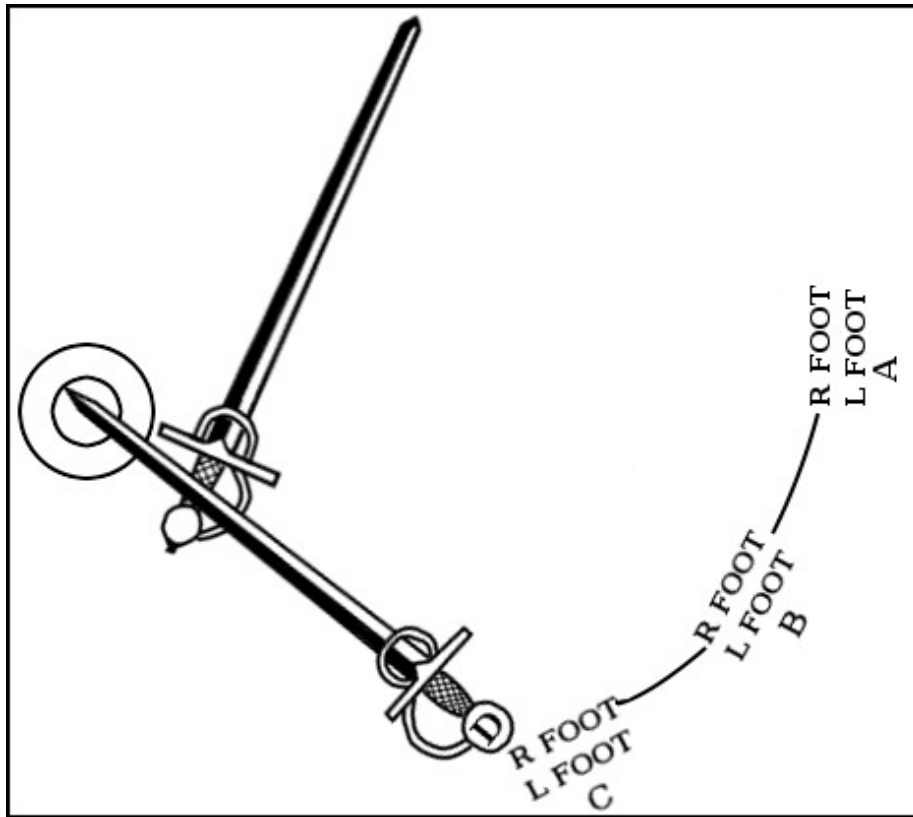
Vulgar technique of crossing the sword in front of the chest.



THIS lesson is well-used among the *diestros* who, confident in their *destreza*, brave greater dangers than those which they can remedy. Crossing the sword in front of their body, the point of it close to the left arm, it appears to them that they are positioned in order to wound by means of contrary movements.

In truth, they are deceived, as they remove the point of the sword from in front of their opponent, which is like opening the door so that one can enter to kill them. The opinion on which they are founded is that having crossed the sword as said, and this demonstration shows, the opponent will throw some thrust to their chest above the sword, and then they will beat it, wounding with a *tajo* in the head. They don't consider the danger that there is if their opponent will go wherever they wish, and not where they wait for it, giving occasion to them, as they are the free lord of their will. Since you are of yours, if your opponent will be established in said demonstration, finding yourself in point A, which is where you have to choose the mean of proportion, a little more inside, and passing to point B with the curved step with the right foot, you will wound them with a thrust below the right arm, which will leave their hope and pretense very much to the contrary of what they were thinking. This strike can be worked because as you will be established straight, the point of your sword so close to their body, and theirs so far from yours (which they ignore), and the accidental movement from the thrust being so brief that it has advantage over all the movements (except the natural) by being impossible to be able to defend except by moving back or bringing down the sword, which is the remedy which all take advantage of in general. Then, you will do that which is advised in the following demonstration; but in this, I note that you don't start this strike, except in going with the mean that I advise you, and that is rather a little more inside, because if you will begin it outside, they would have space to form the beat, which is the blow that they intend, and in their opinion has foundation.

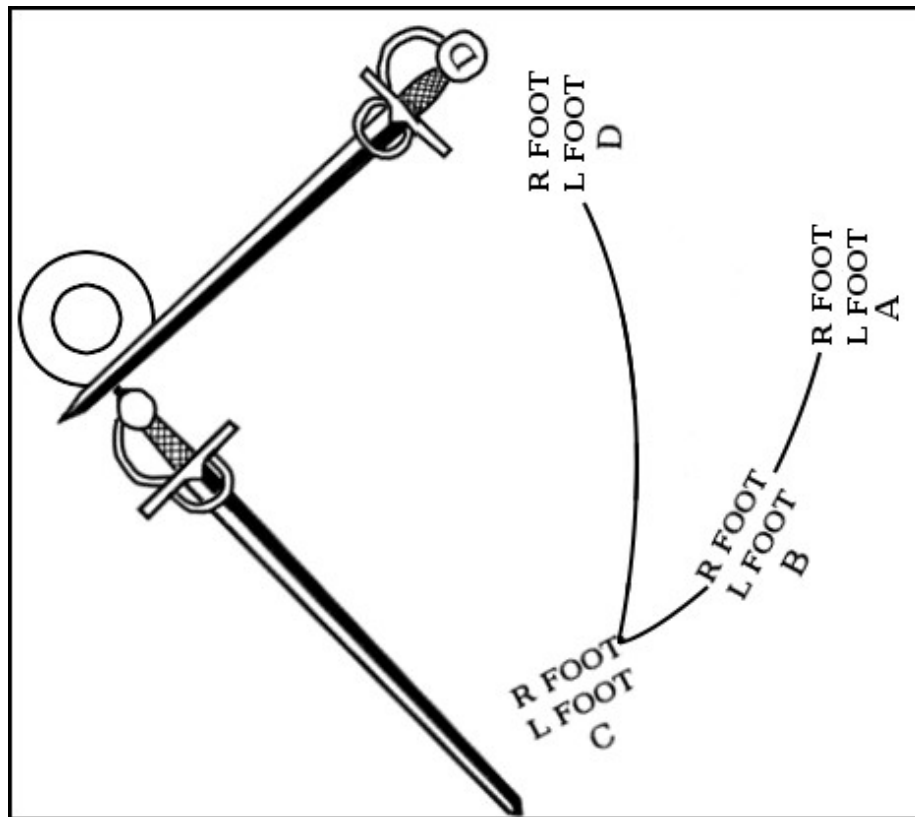
If they will remove the thrust, beating it down,
wound above their sword.



GENERALLY speaking, great perturbation, commotion, confusion, and unrest is caused to a person when something happens contrary to that which they were waiting for and for which they had made some preparation. Coming to the particular of our proposition, I say that not only will the referred happen to our *diestro* of the common *destreza*, but it will be the reason why they are scared, if on the occasion that they gave the sword crossed in front of the chest, they are wounded in the place that it advises you in the demonstration before this.

As they have obligation to seek their defense, they will attend to it, whether it is knowing the beginning of the movement, or with the pain of the execution. In whichever of these parts, if they will want to make some remedy, you will know its beginning, in order to form another strike from it. If they will be moving back and seeking to bring down your sword, which is the last remedy that they have, and that which they ordinarily take advantage of, you have to take note of two things. One is that the impediment that they will place in order to bring down the sword is only in order to be defended, removing that strike but not forming another, with which you will be able to injure them more freely and confidently, so you are not in danger of any injury, as on their part they don't seek it, but only defense as we said. The other is that the impediment is such that the point of their sword remains as parted as it was before, and that you have a free pass in order to be able to go forward, continuing your intent. You will go with much caution in looking to impede the movement that they will make, because they will be able to straighten the sword, as it remains free, and make a superior angle over yours (if in case you will not know the movement, and they will subject you). So if they will want to knock it down, as it is referred, knowing that movement, you will pass from point B to point C, freeing your sword behind their sword and arm, without bending yours, giving a strike of whole circle in the chest, above their sword, as this demonstration shows.

If they will make a deviation on the thrust,
wound them with a *tajo*.

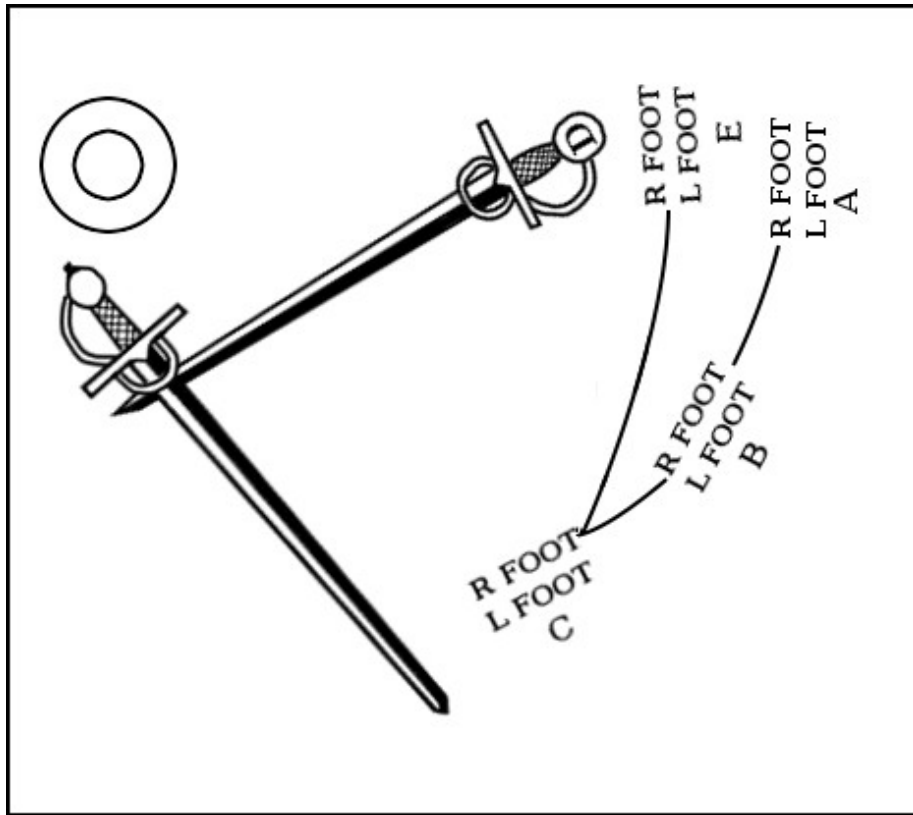


AND due to the past strike being executed in the chest (which, as was said, causes them a great degree of terror by being the place in which they receive more harm, and where they seek to injure more – and this fear is such that they can't conceal or cover it, and in taking swords, in order to exercise with whomever, the first prevention that they make is to guard their face and eyes), if they will impede the strike which was advised you, parting your sword, you have to consider another two things.

The *diestro*
takes note of
how and
where the *tajos*
and *reveses*
have to be
formed.

They are that the deviation that they do consists and is composed of two movements, violent and natural, and that they form an obtuse angle with the sword, thinking to find yours, not preventing the damage that will be able to come to another place because of such long and inconsiderate movements. So freeing your sword from theirs, the force that they will deliver with the violent movement of the deviation will come to be such that their sword ends remote on their right side, and it will not be in their hand to remove the parts of the natural movement, having put them to the violent movement. That action will necessarily finish before it comes to convert from one movement to another, or from the deviation to a strike. Spending such time, you will be able at the beginning to pass from point C (which will be where you will remain) to point D, forming a *tajo*, taking note that it has to be the opposite of the *revés* that we said, because the sword has to go stuck to the left thigh, bending the hand fingernails-down. The reason why you have to form them is plain, according to the part where you will have to wound, because if it had to be on the left side, having to give a step with the right foot on the circumference on the right side, it will be necessary to have it brought close to the left thigh, because there will not be room in another place. If it had to be executed on the right, the step will have to go on the circumference on the left side with the left foot, and it will have to be formed close to the right thigh. In this manner the *tajo* is executed on the left side, and the *revés* on the right, with which you will know where they have to be formed, and in what place they will have to be executed, and also the double techniques, which will be discussed ahead.

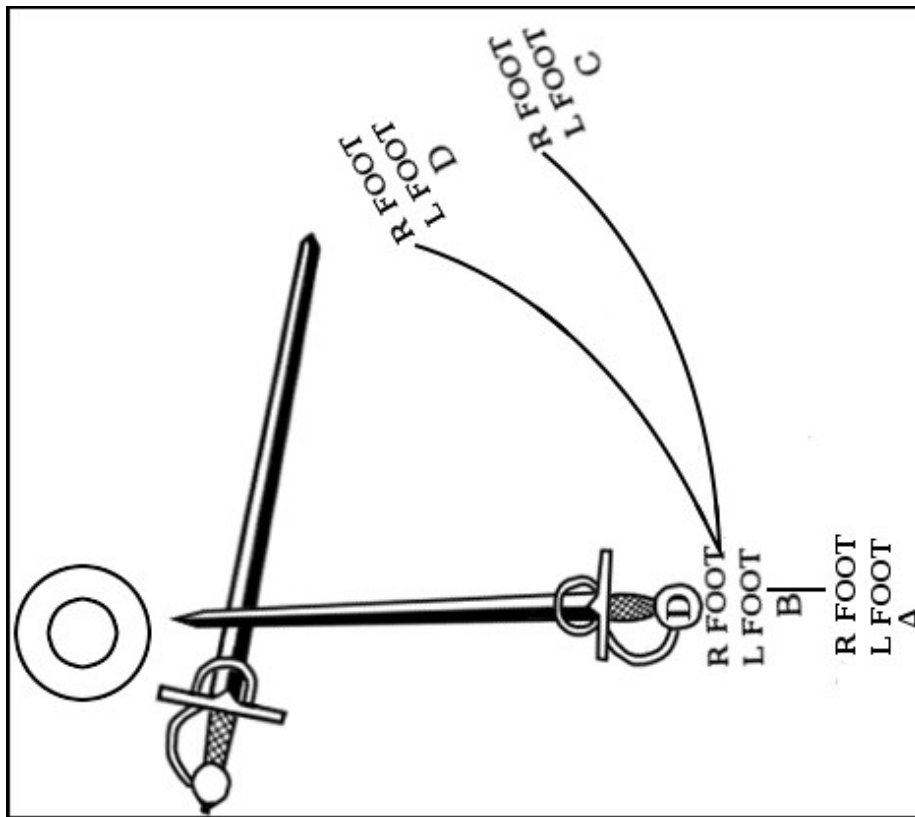
At the start of the deviation, wound them with a straight thrust.



A case could be offered in which your opponent knows the circular strike of *tajo* of which I just advised you, and industriously turns to it in order to take a strike from there, which they call inverting, which is the same as taking a *mandoble* or whichever other that they will see it. This brings to mind the law of Lycurgus, which mandated to the Spartan captains that they must not fight with an enemy many times, so that the enemy wouldn't learn their tricks of war and thereby defeat them.

Now I turn to tell you also that you do not do the same technique many times with your opponent for the same reason, so that they don't learn and prevent it with some remedy, but always differing, so that when they have prevented that which was executed with some remedy, understanding that they have to return to wound with it, you make another, different from that which they will wait for, so that their remedy and prevention is of no benefit. Thus, from point C at the beginning of the start of the deviation (or at the beginning, in case you will not be disposed to form the circular technique, or they were not disposed to receive it, because if it was not deviated, you will be in much danger if you will form the *tajo*), you will be able to pass to point E, as in the deviation that your opponent will make, the swords will come to remain as this demonstration manifests. From there, without bending the arm, but only in order to free the sword, you will move the wrist and give a thrust in the chest. You will be able because of their sword being so remote and parted from your body, and the point of yours being so close and near to theirs. The strike executed with the brevity that is required for such a short movement, you will leave to the mean of proportion, in order to attend to the other movements that they will make.

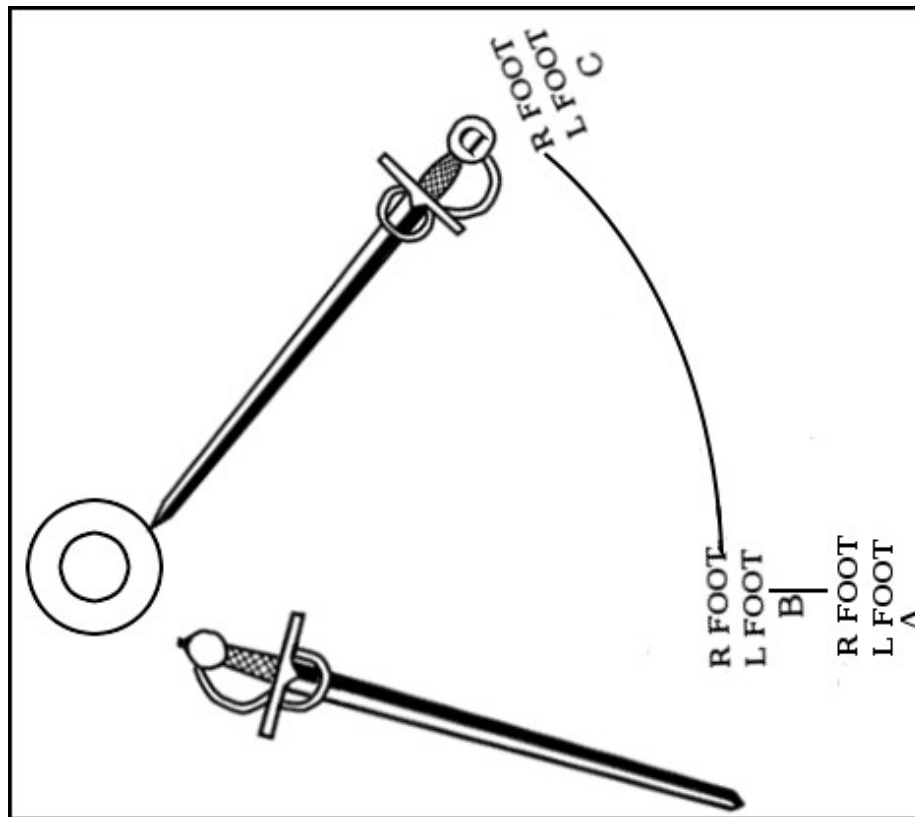
Common blow, which they call inviting.



A technique whose name is inviting the opponent has been and is one of the most principal inventions of the most famous masters that have professed and do profess the vulgar *destreza*, as completely outside of reason as the rest, whose testimony of this truth has given the rigorous experience against it and those that have professed it, that it has been done how these three successive demonstrations will manifest. It is formed in this way: having positioned with their opponent, they throw a small half *tajo* of those which they do, which removes their sword from between the two centers (or bodies), bringing it toward the left side with the right arm across the chest.

So to tell the truth, I say that it is the quickest way to be delivered into the hands of death, and the shortcut by which they will put aside the path in order to more quickly come to it, and a deceit invented by the very devil only for their harm. I justly call it deceit, as they don't know the harm that can come to them from there, as they remove the sword (that which has to defend them) from the front of their opponent, and open the door where one can enter to injure them. The principal intent of doing this technique is that as they uncover the chest, they invite the opponent to wound in it (we don't deal with if one will want to go or not, because this will be in their will – as they is the lord of it, that is the cause that this technique lacks, by consisting of the other's will, which cannot be forced). Because of their opponent being a coward or whichever other reason, if they doesn't want to go, the technique remains without effect. The remedy that they have is returning to invite until the opponent goes. When the opponent leaves to their intent, they catch the sword fingernails-up and, putting in the left foot, give a thrust in the belly. So if your opponent will invite you in said form, you will pass from point A to point B, making an attack as short as it appears in the demonstration, which certainly seems that you want to wound them, because one deceit has to be conquered with another. You will be able to form two strikes from here that will be advised in the following demonstrations.

When they will make a deviation on the attack,
wound them with a thrust.

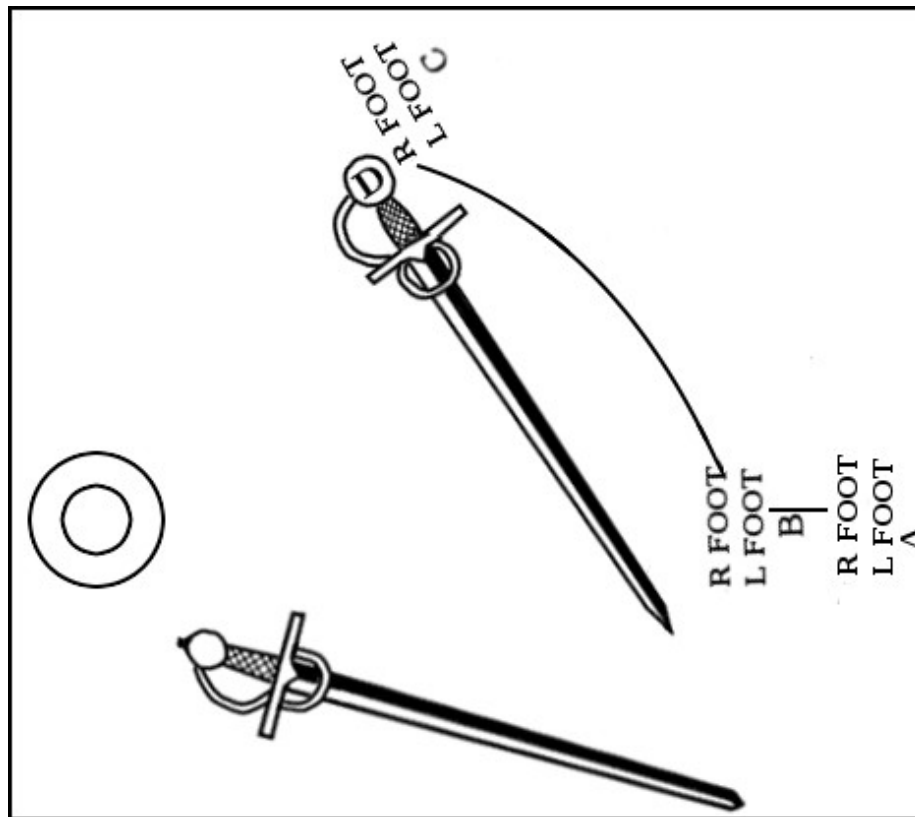


IN the second dialog on the false *destreza*, our author says by way of objection to a vulgar lesson that whichever attack that will be done, it has to be with no greater movement than that which the strike has to have, but much less. Thus, the attack that our demonstration shows is founded on this opinion, as it demonstrates in the step of feet being so short, and the point of the sword not reaching the opponent's body.

If they will inconsiderately want to catch your sword, which is what they will be waiting for due to being their principal intent, and after having caught it (which you will be guarded from with all caution), they will want to put in the left foot. Consider that in such movement, they will bring their body close and shorten the sword, deviating it from your body. At the beginning of all this, which you will have great knowledge of, you will pass from point B, which will be where you will finish the attack, to point C, freeing your sword under their hilt without curving the arm, but with the feet supplying the distance and step that will be suitable to be able to wound straight and free. You will give a strike in the chest because having brought their body close (as has been said), and their sword remaining so remote because of that force that they will deliver, rising to the obtuse angle. With the remnant of that force, they will lower naturally to their right side and acute angle, and you will be able to wound them. Because of these advantages, and having gained many degrees of the profile,⁹⁰ you will remain without any danger, but I advise you to leave then to the mean of proportion, as I have just advised you and for its own effect.

⁹⁰ *grados del perfil*

At the start of the deviation, wound them with a
tajo.

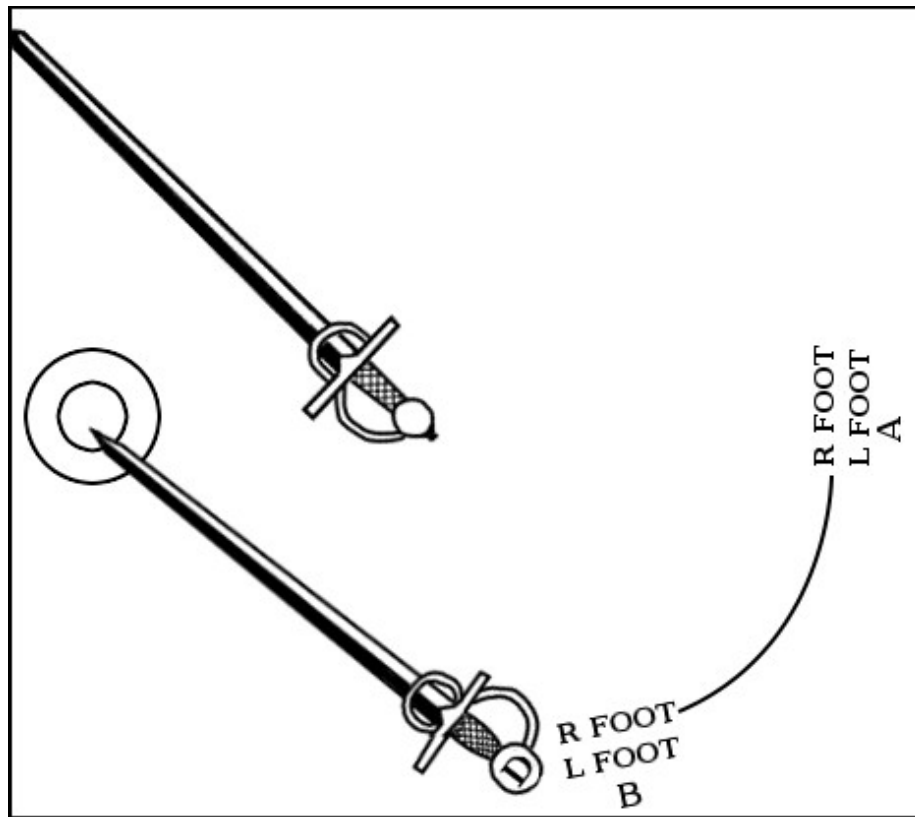


Take note that
the letter C has
to be D.

IN some parts we have advised the inequality that there is in bodies as well as lines, in all the movements and strikes that will be formed, so there is no impediment in the execution of them. In this, you have to have particular consideration that if the attack that you will make will be deflected by your opponent to their right side, you have to pass to the left, which will be unoccupied, in order to injure them.

Since you wounded them with a thrust, now in order to differentiate, you will be able to wound with a *tajo*, taking it on your left side, as said before: passing from point B to point D, executing it in the head. Due to not knowing the distances or not having true knowledge of the means (two important foundations of *destreza*), if their technique of inviting will begin from such mean that you will be able to wound them with the attack and parts of that movement, you will seek it at the beginning of the remiss movement, when the sword will pass to their left side. When they turn to make the deviation, the effect of your strike is already passed, and in such similar cases, this is where it suits to know the proximity and remoteness of the opponent's sword and yours. Proximity is the closeness that your sword will be to their body, and remoteness is the distance that their sword will be from your body. Although in this demonstration, it will be necessary to have a little caution so that when the technique is worked, they take the sword outside of the centers (which are the bodies) remiss, first to one side and then to another. When they will want to make the deviation, you will be able to give the strike that I have advised, with the consideration of always keeping to the straightness of the arm that I have advised you, because the opponent will damage it.

Ordinary technique, which is the cut attack.

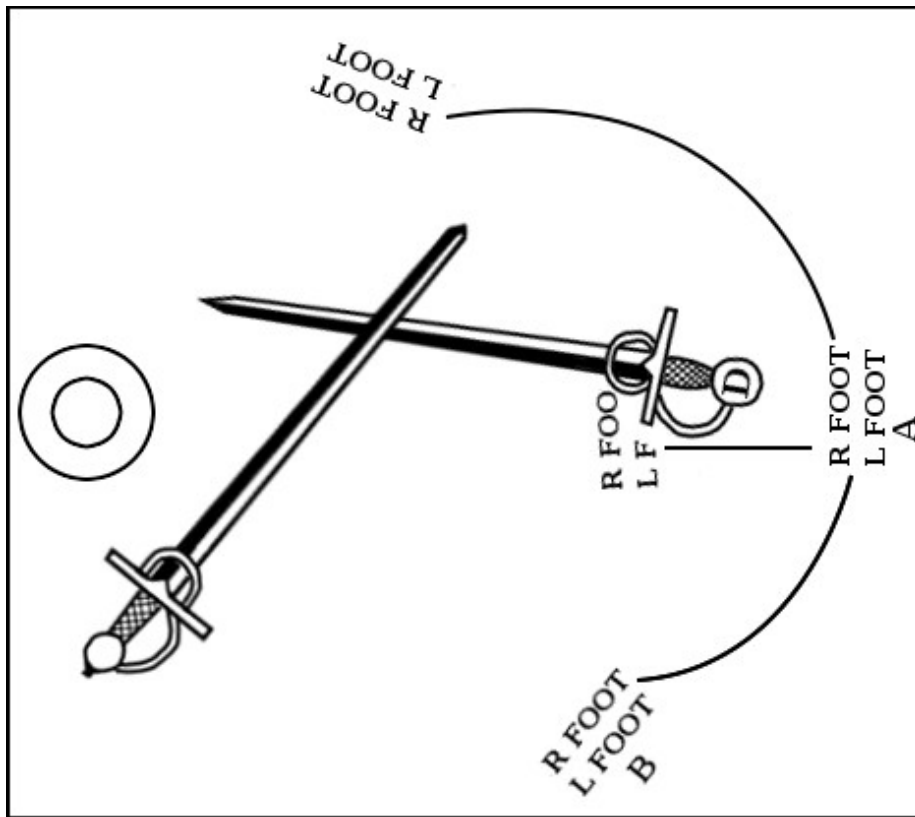


At the violent movement, wound them with a thrust

ONE of the most essential precepts of the ordinary *destreza*, and one of its most esteemed techniques, and even that which its professors make use of the most in the occasions offered to them, is a cut attack with much noise. With a furious movement and frightening visage, they lift the arm with much anger.

The poor ignorant against whom they do it is intimidated and afraid because they can't take advantage of the parries that they have been told to make. Although they want to make use of them, for the reasons said before, the natural movement is not easily resisted, and with the fear of this imagination, they don't parry, they flee. The faith that they have in this folly has come to such that, although they are so distant from their opponent that they cannot reach them with six steps, in making this attack, they count it as a wound, as if they had executed it. I never cease to be amazed at the inconsiderate and foolish fear of the one, the recklessness of the other, and the folly of both, because the one fears where there is no danger. If one would know to make use of that attack at the rising of the sword up high, and the fear that subjects them so is removed, then from where it appears to them that there is danger, they would take victory. If the other considered that which they do, and the danger in which they place themselves, they would give many thanks that God had wanted to guard them all the other times that they had done it. The reason is that the first movement is violent and rises to the obtuse angle, leaving the opposing sword in potency and close to their body. According to our author (and reason), the line that has less path to travel arrives to the point that its mover designates before that which will have more. By that, we leave proven that the right angle reaches more than any other. If your opponent will want to do that attack, having chosen your mean, when they will raise to the obtuse angle, you will pass from point A (which will be the mean) to point B, giving a curved step, and wound in the chest. It will be always this way when the opponent will make such movement, and I advise that it has to always be lifting the arm straight.

Famous vulgar technique that they call testing.

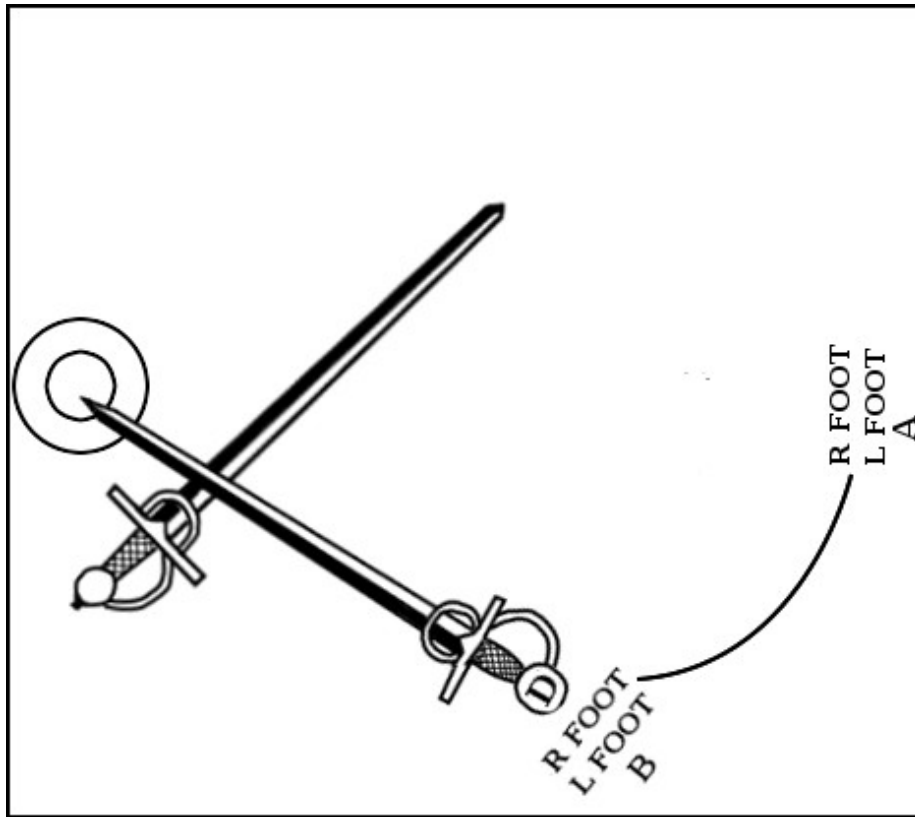


THIS technique which now we will deal with is one that, if the *diestro* did not know it, or the master did not teach it, in the one they would have no confidence, and at the other they would laugh and not admit the them into the catalog of *diestros*. It is so generally used that they deal with none more ordinarily, and it is even that in which they do their counters and re-counters better, if they find an opponent that attends to their intent.

Its proper and celebrated name is testing,⁹¹ as this demonstration manifests, which is composed and worked in this way: they test the middle of the opponent's sword with the point of their sword, and there they wait for the opponent to leave to wound to the chest, and from that movement, they throw out a strike, leaving the sword and putting in the left foot. If the opponent does not want or dare to leave to wound them, they return to test until the opponent leaves, because the jurisdiction of this technique, although so celebrated, does not extend to more than whether the opponent wants to or not. Others that know somewhat more, in testing, turn the arm fingernails-up in order to give a strike in the face. This is without any consideration of from what point, in what distance, with what mean, how close or distant the opponent's sword is, whether with small or long movement, whether one can wound them at the beginning when they will go to test, or what type of strike their opponent will form, in what part of the sword, or with what part of it must it be tested, or if they will pretend to leave to wound in one part after being tested and will wound in another, or if they have weakness in that movement that they make, or seeing if they make two movements and will be able to be wounded with one from their opponent. Neither do they advise if the opponent will catch those first parts of the movement, subject the sword, and wound them in the same part of their technique. The *diestro* being obliged to consider all that, so that they remedy the danger that will be offered to them at some point. If your opponent will test your sword in said form, you have three strikes with which to wound him. The two with curved steps, and the other with a forward step, are those that follow.

91 *tentar*

In the beginning when they will test, wound them above the sword.

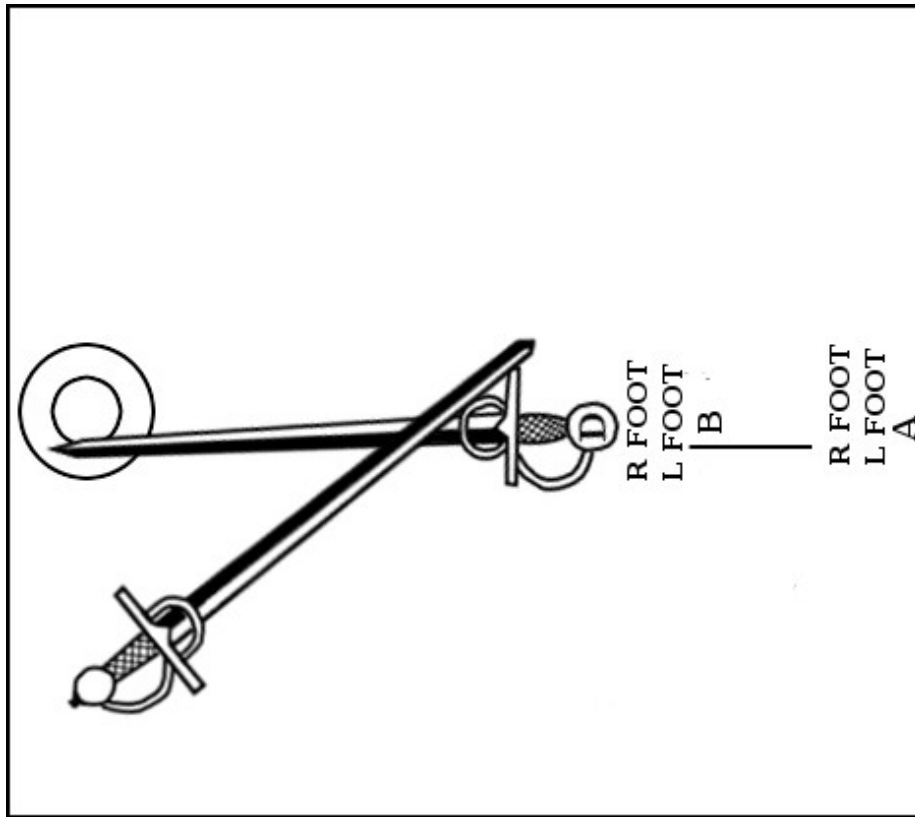


IT seems good to me that the reasons that we have just given will be sufficient for the little foundation of this technique to be understood. I trust that even when its professors hear and understand them, they must be satisfied with them, and they must be the cause of rejecting what they have had as an idol up to now, removing the credit that they have given without reason. So with this truth, it has to remain naked of its lies and undone by such, but if some obstinate ignorant will remain and meet with you, and they will want to test your sword, the first blow with which you will be able to injure them has to be by means of knowing the beginning of its movement.

Take note that with such mode of testing, they remove the point of the sword from in front of your body, making a remiss movement, and the first movement with which they test is not in order to wound, but only for testing. They waste time in this, and another movement can be made during that one they will make in the beginning, passing from point A (which is the mean of proportion) to point B, giving a curved step, freeing your sword behind their quillons and right hand. Without bending the arm, but with only the wrist, you will give a strike of whole circle in the chest, above their sword. Freeing it has to be done without the opponent's sword arriving to yours, because if they meet, it will be a signal that they will have finished that action of the first movement; if you will begin then, they would be able to do the same and create danger.

At the beginning of the movement of testing, you would also be able to give the same step, or somewhat longer, and wound them below the sword arm. The first permits more safety, because the strike is done with a superior angle on the sword, and in the other it is inferior, and then the downward beat happens, which the *revés* counters, and one technique leads to another; with what we have said, they are wounded in one point.

When they go to test, wound them straight with
a thrust in the chest.

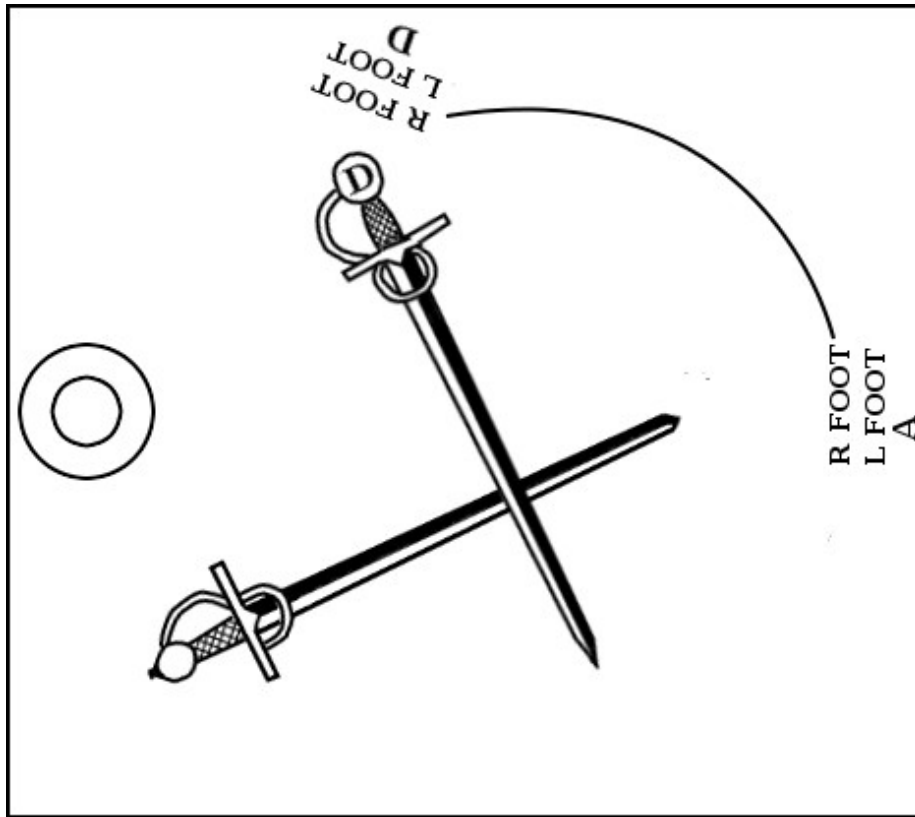


LITTLE would be known in *destreza* if the opponent always had to be wounded with only one strike and in only one place, but its marvelous effects and their variety are such that it is necessary to remit them to exercise, due to being impossible to deal with them all. The strike with which you will be able to wound, which this demonstration shows, is worth consideration because of its value, as well as what our author says by way of objection in this same technique of testing, that one who would test the sword in the middle will not leave without danger, because with a small movement that the *diestro* makes, the sword that they will test will easily fall on the strong of the opponent's sword, remaining free and wounding safely, which is what this demonstration manifests.

Carranza, fol.
115

The reason is that as they arrive to test with the weak of the sword, placing it on the greater strength of the opponent's sword, those parts of movement are caught, and they are wounded by it. Wanting to do likewise, you will take note of what was said and pass from point A to point C, guiding the strike to the chest with some force, with which the point of their sword will end up falling on the hilt of yours. The times that this strike has been done, seeing that they have been unable defend themselves, the most that have sought has been wanting to wound in the face from that same point, and by only lifting the hilt of the sword a little, it is impeded. You will be able to make use of this remedy, although it will be better to wound, and at the point of leaving to seek the mean of proportion, even though later you will know a universal impediment for all types of strikes or movements that may be done, without it being necessary to turn back once you begin to graduate forward, unless done voluntarily. This has to be dealt with in its place very particularly.

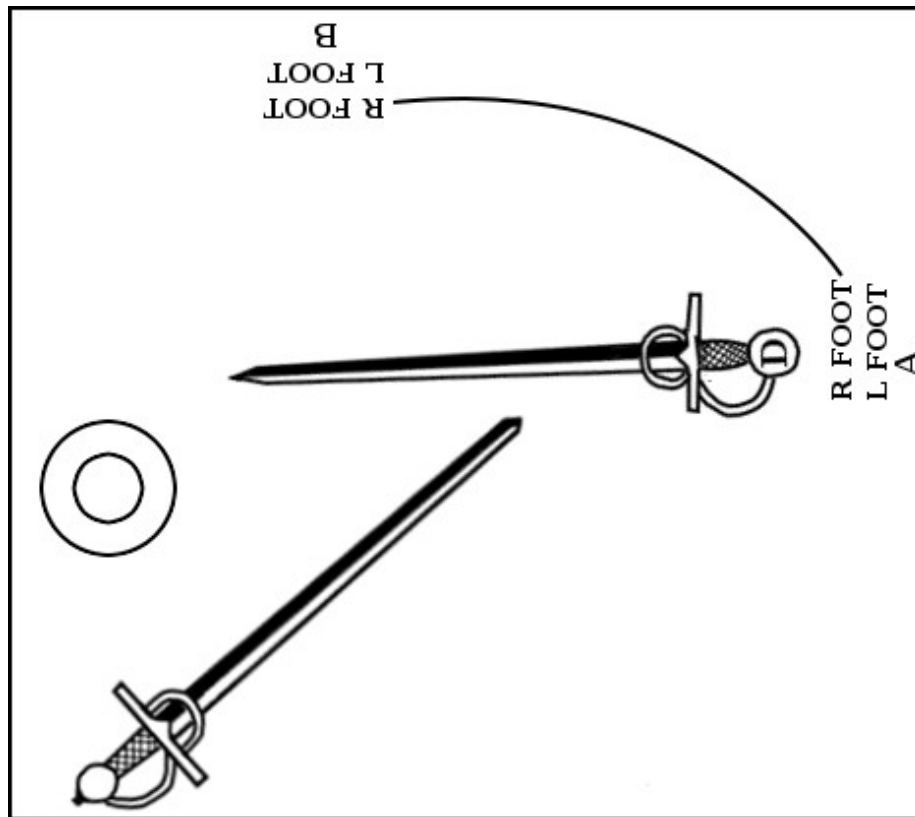
After having tested, if they will want to wound with a thrust, subject the sword.



ALTHOUGH this demonstration and its effect are new doctrine to you, and you do not understand it totally due to it being necessary to have many principles for its true knowledge and a separate declaration (as will be made ahead, very copiously), by being that on which this science is founded, it is enough for you now (until we come to the fifth part) to know how you will impede the technique of testing that we are dealing with. For this impediment, you have to take note that the movement that is done in order to test the sword is weak, as we have proven, and likewise that they test with the weak of the sword.

Knowing all of this and the beginning of their movement, you will pass from point A to point D with a curved step, subjecting the sword so that it comes to remain below yours in the proper form that appears in this demonstration, with which you will be able to impede their determination due to said reasons. With this achieved, you will be able to wound them with two strikes. The one is forming a *tajo* from above their own sword, which you will be able to do because of the point of it remaining so remote (leaving a little more with a half step, if it will suit), and if they will make another movement for a thrust, return to it being subjected as it is now. The other strike is a thrust, making a small extreme with the arm fingernails-up in order to be able to wound without parting or lifting your sword from the opponent's sword; however, it is advised that if your opponent will make the movement of the said testing so brief that you cannot place the impediment at the beginning, you should not trouble yourself, but wait for it. At the point that they will lift the sword in order to make an attack or give a strike, you will subject it, giving the same step, killing that movement that will begin and making the strikes that I have advised to you.

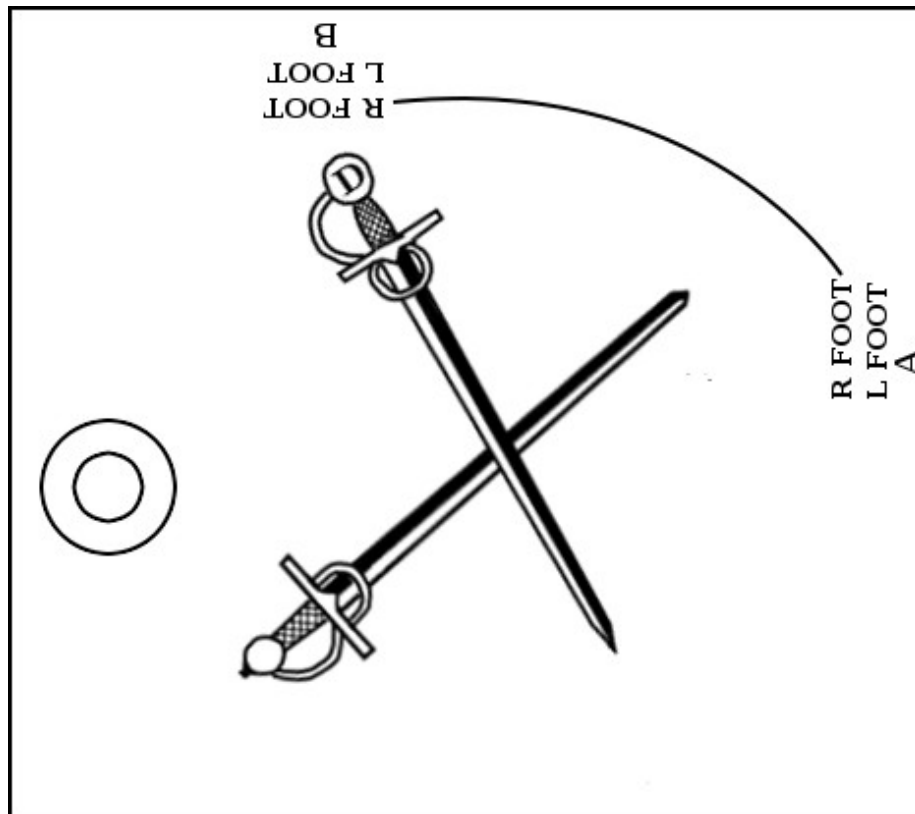
Ordinary technique which they call punching thrust.



AMONG the professors of the ordinary *destreza*, an opinion is received and established as law that in order to give a thrust, whether by testing the opponent's sword or without it, it has to be punching – that is, withdrawing the arm, bending the joint of the elbow, and then returning to extend it with much force; it appears to them that because they withdraw the arm, it must be the strongest thrust and without any remedy.

They don't want to see that when they do it after having tested the opponent's sword (as said before), they remove theirs from that first place where they put it, and in order to give it, they put in the left foot, and in the time that such superfluous movements are made, harm can come to them. Carranza gives the reason by way of objection, that the testing, putting in the left foot and arm, and giving a strike at the same time cannot be, because each of the referred things has to be worked with separate movement and in determined time, and in the separateness of the punching thrust, where does the opponent's sword have to be so that it doesn't injure? This is certain, as you are curious, look carefully and you will see that when they test the sword, it was movement without consideration, because if they wanted to wound from there without another movement of deviation, but only extending the arm, they will reach your body, giving their strike (we're not dealing with whether an impediment to it can be placed or not right now). Although they can reach from there, because the arm withdraws, at the point that their sword will leave yours when withdrawing the arm, their body will remain closer, and you can wound them with little movement. If they put in the left foot, it makes the sword shorter and their body comes closer to yours, where by only being straight, you will injure them without them being able to reach, except if they will remove the left foot. Against all that, you will defend and wound easily (if suitable) in only one place and with only one movement against however many they will make.

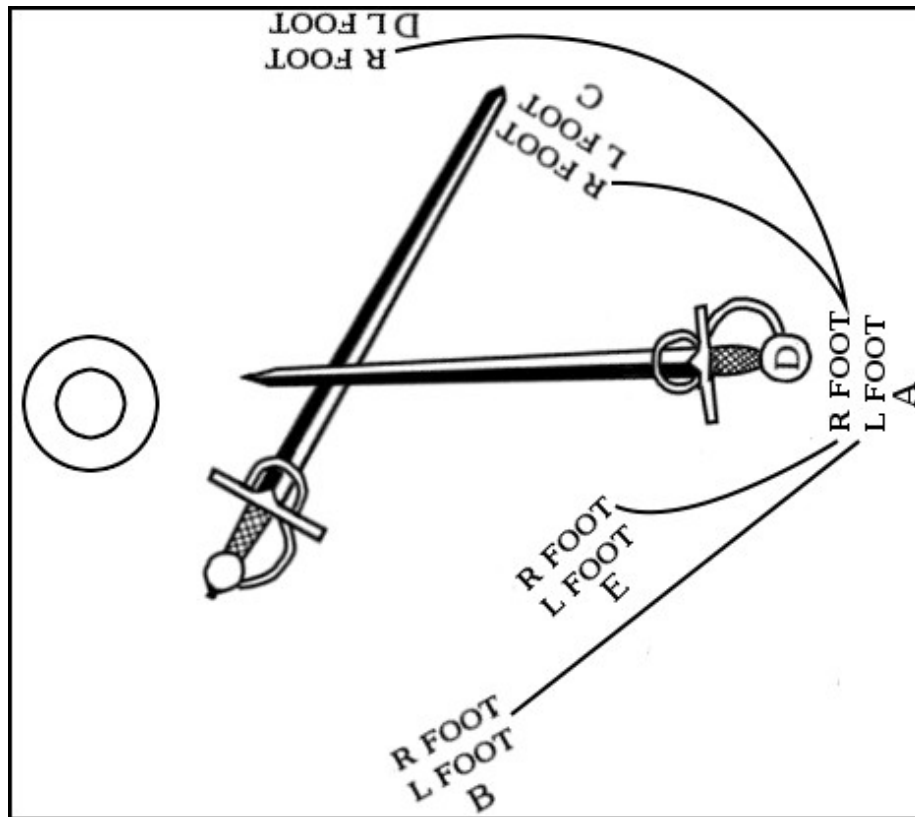
When they will extend the arm in order to wound by punching, subject the sword.



IN this demonstration and the last, we give premises of a universal impediment against all the movements that could be considered in all the weapons, whose declaration we leave for its place, because you are not disposed to understand it now.

I call it an impediment because it impedes the opponent's determinations already placed in action, which we call movements, and even many times those in potency. You will be able to take marvelous effects in your favor and defense with it, against whichever cause that the opponent will give. In whichever way or mode that the opponent wants to wound, this universal impediment (as the lord of all) robs them of the parts of movement that they have already made, whether it be the violent or natural movement, remiss or mixed, personal or accidental, quick or slow, and converts it to the *diestro's* favor, taking offense and defense. Our author calls this killing the movement, pressing the opponent's sword, after having given the blow on mine. In this demonstration, you have to apply it in this manner: the opponent having finished testing your sword, they will want to injure you from there with the punching thrust (or without testing). At the point that they will extend the arm in order to execute it, you will pass from point A to point B, subjecting their sword, killing that arrogant movement as many times they will form it. If you will want to wound them, you will be able with a *tajo* or thrust, as we advise in that of testing, so this and that take the same order in step as well as in the impediment, and the same in the strikes.

The most famous technique of the common *destreza*, whose name is *arrebatar y tajo*.⁹²



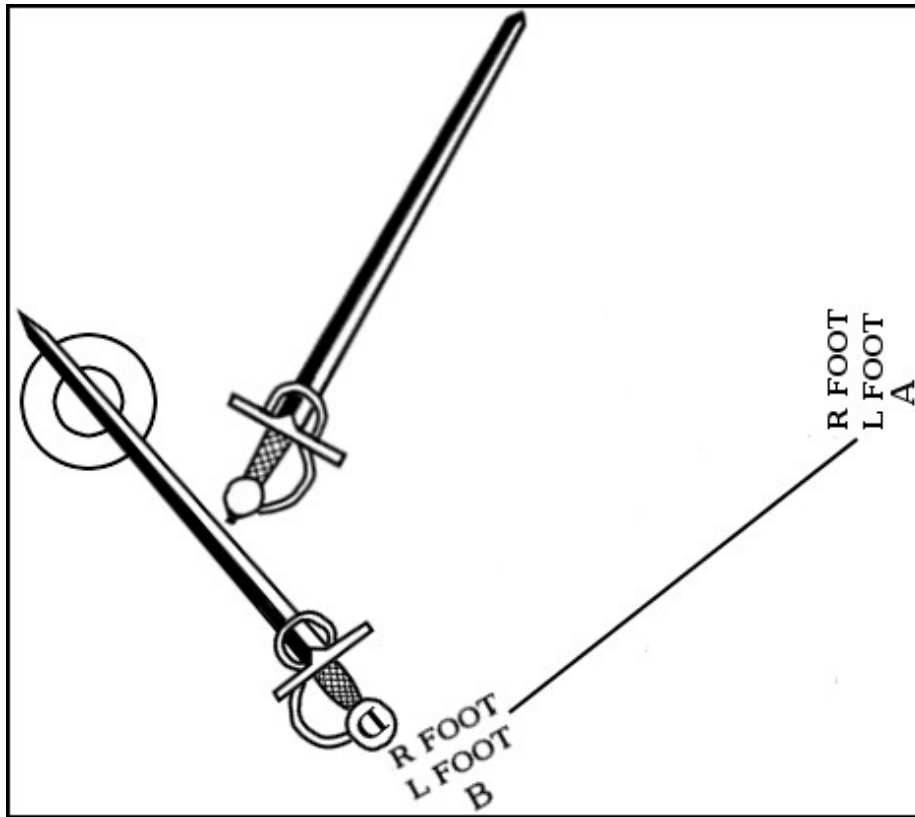
OTHER *diestros* who have achieved most of their *destreza* have chosen as a particular remedy, in order to thwart their opponent if they see them positioned, to beat away their sword, putting in the right foot, wounding with a *tajo*. This is a technique in which they have confidence, and as they say, it is the remedy against those that dare to position themselves.

⁹² beat away and cut

The
movements
that necessarily
have to be
done in order
to beat it away,
and in which
angles they
participate.

I don't know what reasons or appreciations were considered in the little reason on which they are found, because of what we said in the demonstration of the three circles that the arm makes, where it was proven that the lesser will defeat and reach before the greater, because that which the opponent makes in order to beat it away is with the whole arm, and as long as its own length plus that of the sword. The rest of this consists (necessarily) of four movements and the participation of two angles: the movements are two natural, one remiss, and one violent, and the angles are the most dangerous; all of which, for the satisfaction and convention of its aficionados, I will attempt to declare. The first natural movement is to lower the arm and sword in order to place it below the opponent's sword, for beating it away, where all that which is lowered participates in the acute angle. When they place their sword below the opponent's, in that separation that the point makes from between the two bodies, its owner having it toward their left side, that is the remiss movement. When the sword rises in order to thwart the opponent's, that is the violent movement, where it participates in and arrives to the obtuse angle. When it lowers in order to give the *tajo*, that is the last natural movement. With all that, they don't understand that in the time that they will spend on such long movements, that with only one small movement which is what the wrist makes, one is able to wound them, helped by the steps. They remain with their sword in the air, without encountering the *diestro's* and without making any effect, and the opponent's sword wounding them securely, as can be seen in the following demonstrations, which are confirmed with long experience against those who do this technique.

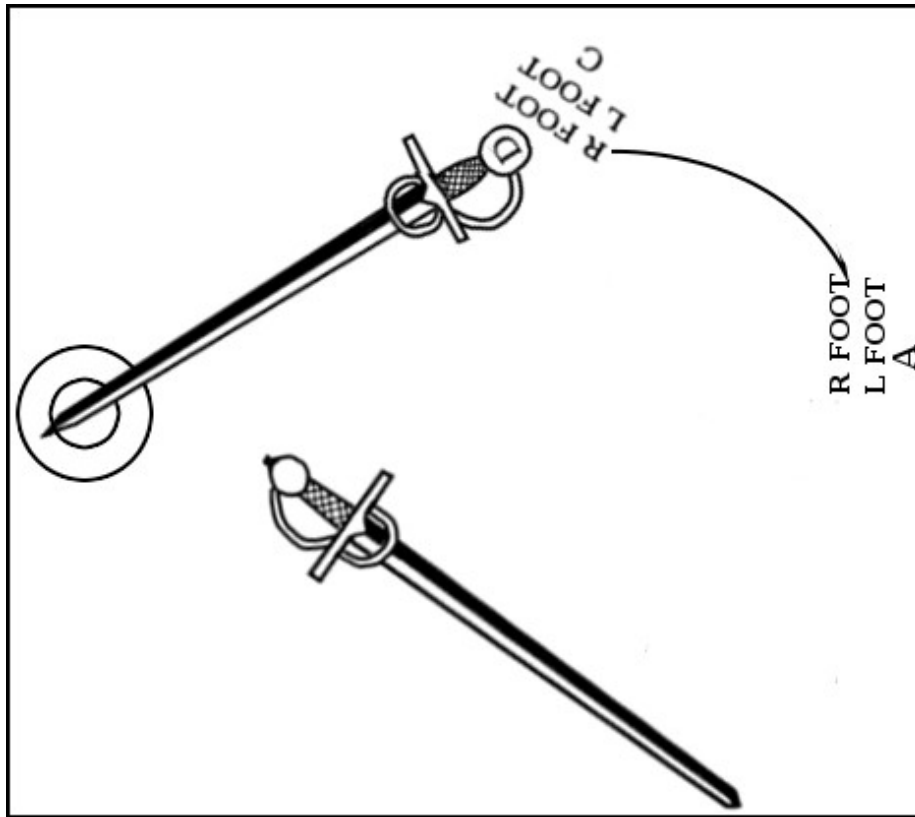
At the beginning of the remiss movement, that was to beat away, wound them with a straight thrust.



THE impulse of the force that they deliver in making this technique is so accelerated that even though it is composed of such movements and participation of the two harmful angles, it suits you to know its beginning in order to make use of it, because the *diestro* that knows the beginnings entirely will easily remedy the ends.

Having come to this perfection, when your opponent started to beat away the sword, making the remiss movement, bringing the sword toward their left side, taking it from between the two centers, you will pass with total diligence from point A to point B, giving a straight step on the line of the rectilinear angle that is imagined on the circumference, as we said and declared in its demonstration, freeing the sword so that it doesn't encounter the opponent's sword, because it will be thwarted and kept from making its strike. There has to be inequality of lines as well as of bodies here, and thus you have to free the sword above the opponent's hilt and arm, taking note that they go with it toward their left side, and freeing yours as it is said, you will come to wound them below their right arm. It has to be at the end of the remiss movement and the beginning of the violent, before it is finished and the natural movement begins, because then you will not be able to give the step without notable danger, nor will your strike come to effect. If it started to lower due to the sword naturally seeking its center, as well as due to the force delivered, your arm will not be sufficient to resist its fury even if it would help; because of that, it is said that a strong force has to be defeated with an agile one. Above all, I advised that you have to bring the arm straight, without curving it at all, but that the feet supply the distance that is required for the strike with the step.

At the beginning of the natural movement,
wound with a thrust.

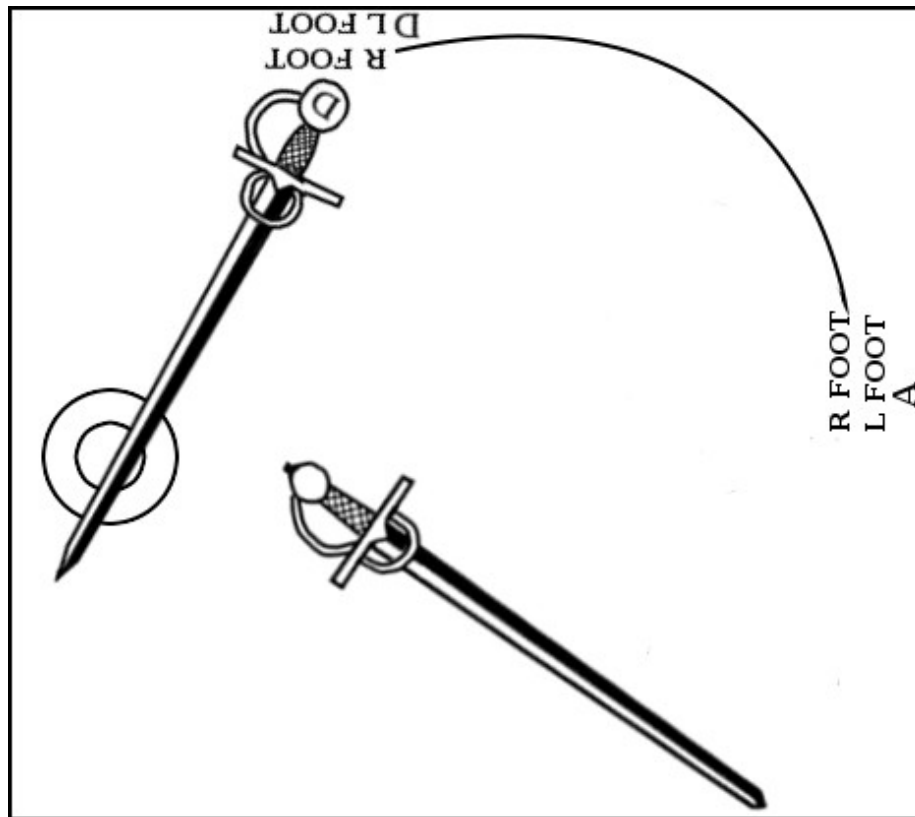


THE strike that this demonstration shows is so secret to those who beat the sword away that the long experience of it has been very necessary, so that some have come (although reluctantly) to know the danger in which they place themselves when they want to do this technique. But experience, as we said, being the disillusionment of all things that it is, has given them probable reasons for its uncertainty.

Strike after
time against
the *arrebatar y*
tajo.

On the contrary, however much that this strike has, the old fondness that they have for their technique is the reason that, although they confess it to be good, they relapse and do it on whatever occasion, because long custom is not easily forgotten. For that, you have to consider that, as said, this technique consists of many movements, and in this you have to take advantage of all, because it is a strike after time, which is after all the movements having passed. When they place their sword below yours in order to beat it away and raise with the violent movement with that large circle that they make with all the arm, you will free above their hilt, making a movement with only the wrist, in the manner of a C. When the action of their force finishes the violent movement and starts the natural, you will pass from point A to point C, passing your sword below theirs, with inequality of bodies and lines, giving a strike in the chest. Their sword will remain so remote from your body and to their right side, as this demonstration manifests, that it is impossible not only to wound you, but to even be defended.

At the beginning of the natural movement,
wound them with a *tajo*.



THE greatest artifice of *destreza*, and where its greatness, power, and lordship is most clearly manifest, is in giving to its professors a method and order so that they can, by the cause and place that their opponent will want to wound (to each one), snatch away the beginnings of the movements that they will make and make their own strike in it, executing it in the proper part that they want.

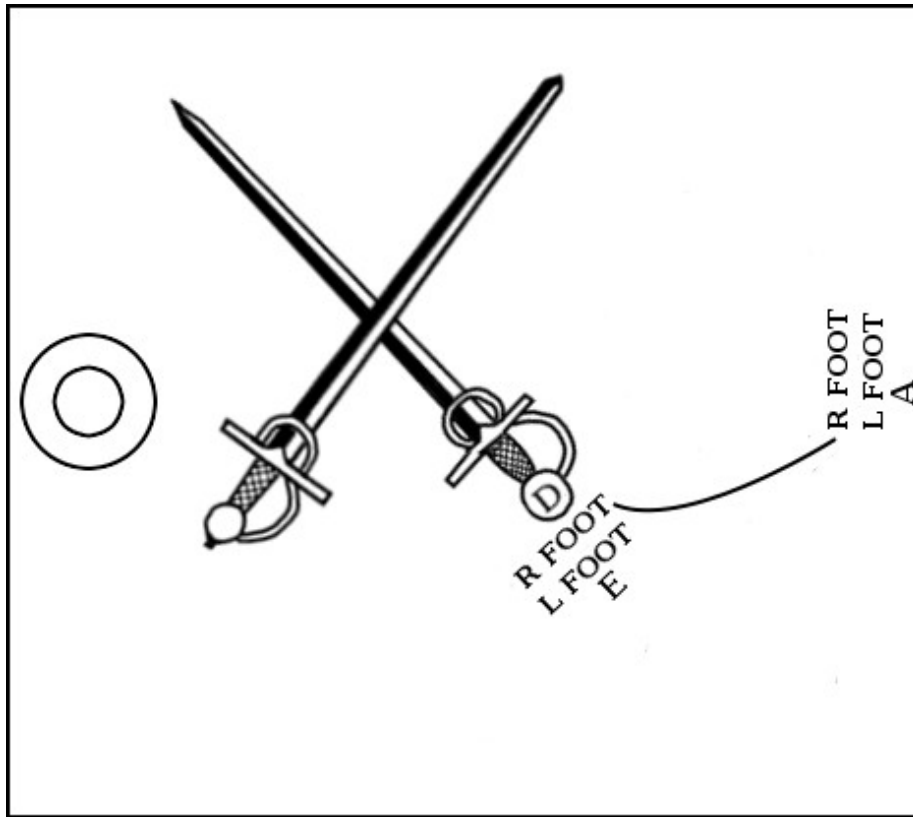
Carranza, fol.
31

This is a
formed
technique.

Carranza, fol.
41

Although I myself have no doubt and am well-experienced, so that you give him credit, the authority of Carranza will apply, saying that by the same cause and reason that the technique is done, it returns to be undone by the same. In this there is no doubt, because if you look attentively and study it carefully, you will find the truth of it, which will be seen in the present point. Having come to the order with which it has to be done, you have to take note that when the opponent will place the sword below yours in order to beat it away and form a *tajo*, that due to having to be executed on the left side of your head, it will suit them to be pass to the same side because the steps always have to follow the type of strike that will be formed. Specifically, at the point that they will form the *tajo* and pass the body to your left side, at the beginning of the violent movement, you will pass from point A to point D, taking your own *tajo* which, by means of the inequality of the bodies and lines, you will be able to execute in the head and on the side that they wanted. Likewise, this is what our author says, that the formed techniques have their differences, because sometimes they are formed from the perfect attacks, and others from their own movements that come to wound, as when the opponent produces the first movement in order to make the *tajo*, and we catch the beginning of the *tajo* and form the same *tajo* that they started, and we wound them with it. You will be able to do this very safely, because of the truth that this technique has in itself, as well as the credit given by the great experience and authority of our author.

At the beginning of the remiss and violent movement, subject the sword.

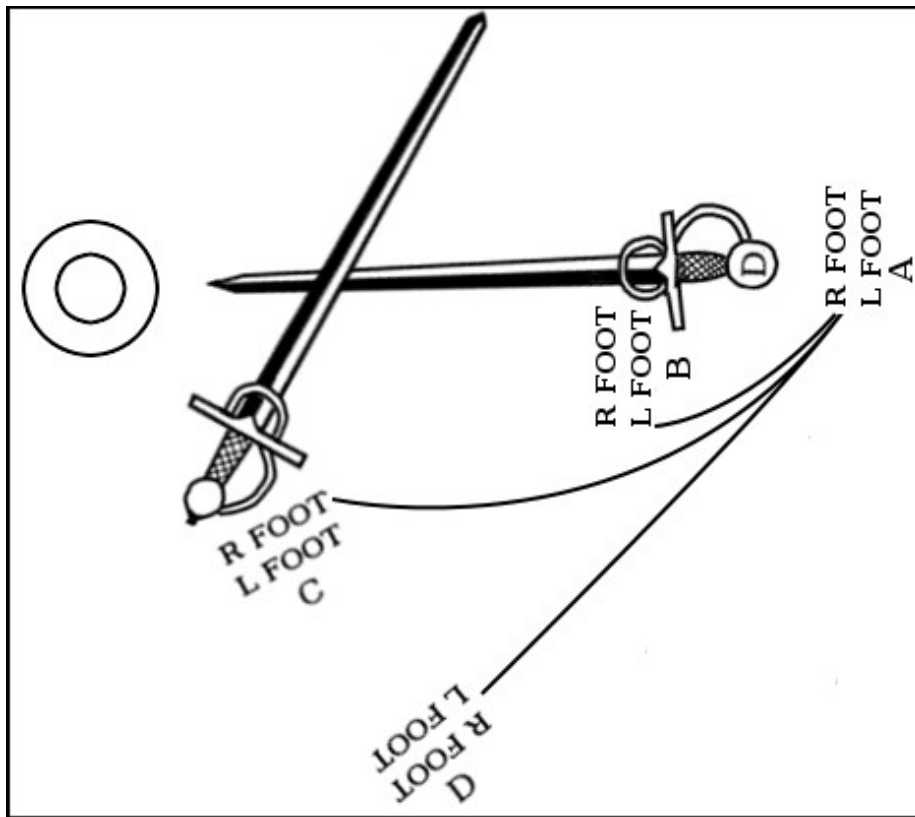


Take note that the sword marked D has to be above instead of below.

IT has already been said that the formed techniques have their division and ends in which they are formed, with the *diestro* sometimes making use of the perfect attacks, and other times of their own movements. They are also formed at the beginning of the violent movement, and others at the beginning of the mixed, and others at the remiss. For this occasion, you will have to take advantage of the violent and remiss, at the beginning of both and in that which will begin the beating away. At the point that their sword will cross below yours with the remiss movement, you will pass quickly from point A to point E, subjecting it, which they will then place below carelessly, not considering the danger that they suffer or the strike that you will be able to give above their own sword, which will be in the chest.

The reason why the step has to be curved and not straight on the line of the diameter, which one will consider to be easy, is that if the step was straight, you will begin to make the impediment, or *atajo*, with the weak of the sword on the middle of the opponent's sword, and in no way will you be able to subject it because of the greater strength that it has there, and it would be dangerous due to the force that will have been transferred from their motion. Doing it as we say, their sword will be remote, which is what is sought, and you will place the impediment with many degrees of strength, and when they will want to raise it, they will be unable, because of their movement being violent and yours natural. For example, if a stone came descending from a height naturally, and at the same time another was rising violently, and they encountered each other on the way, the one rising will not make the one lowering return to rise again, changing the natural movement with which it lowers, but the opposite: the one lowering naturally will make the one rising change that violent movement to natural, returning together, with the one that was lowering being above the one which was rising. The same will happen to you in this case, that your sword will make theirs change that forceful action that your opponent had delivered into a natural movement, lowering together, with yours above.

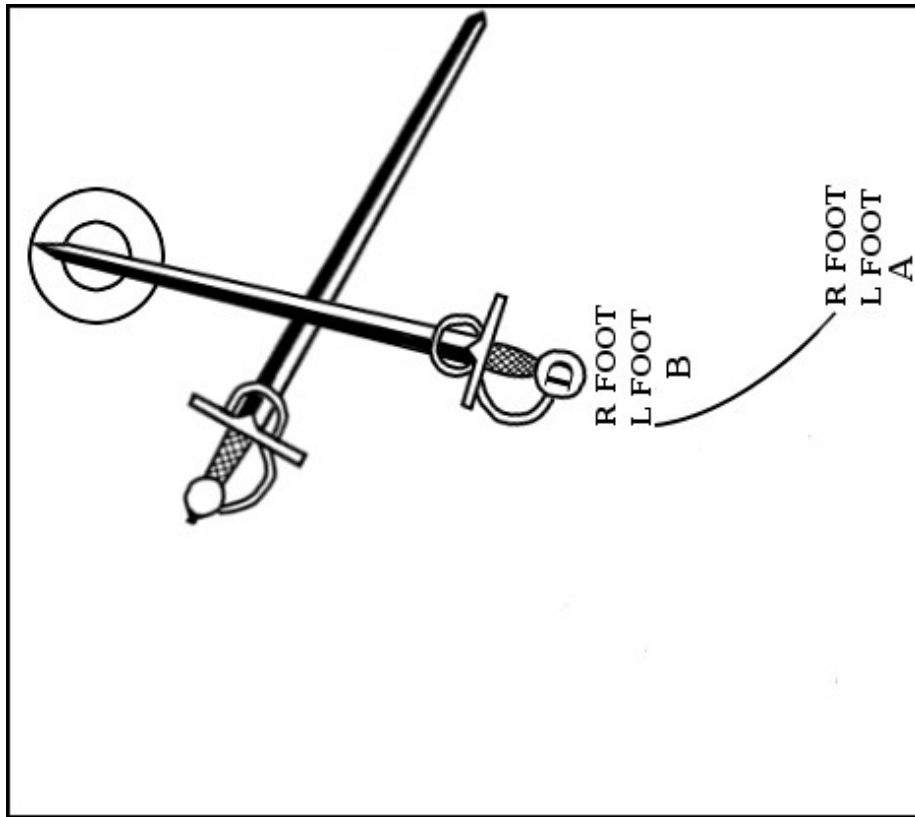
Vulgar technique of giving a blow to the sword.



AMONG the opinions that the masters have kept, and have mandated their disciples to keep with a strange appreciation, is a technique as esteemed by them as it is abhorred by those that understand it and know the uncertainty on which it is founded. Seeing their opponent positioned, they give a very strong blow on the opponent's sword with theirs, with the intent to knock it from their hand.

The reason for thinking it good and having given it credit is because they have done it with some who have had it knocked down because of not knowing how to take the sword and the principles of the movements (which is more important). As we have already advised how it has to be taken and placed in demonstration, I refer you to it. I only want to manifest the poor foundation that it has, as the blow that they want to give is composed and consists of three movements: one violent when the sword lifts, another natural when they discharge the blow, and another remiss, parting their sword from between the two centers. In the time spent in making those, the opponent's sword will be able to defend. They don't take note that when they want to give a blow on the sword, the opponent will be able to give them some formed *revés* and remain free, with their sword on the floor. Nor do they note that one will be able to wound with a thrust with great rigor, putting in the left foot, occupying that angle that is made in the remiss movement, because it seems to them (and they say so) that no one can know what they want to do, and they resort to insisting that it has to be very fast, and when the opponent will be careless, like what a *diestro* could be if they were negligent. Finally, when they give these reasons, and when the unfounded technique is taken to the plaza, they conclude by saying that it has to be very fast, and one time in life and another in death. The remedy against it will be seen in the following demonstrations.

At the beginning of the natural movement, free the sword and wound with a thrust.

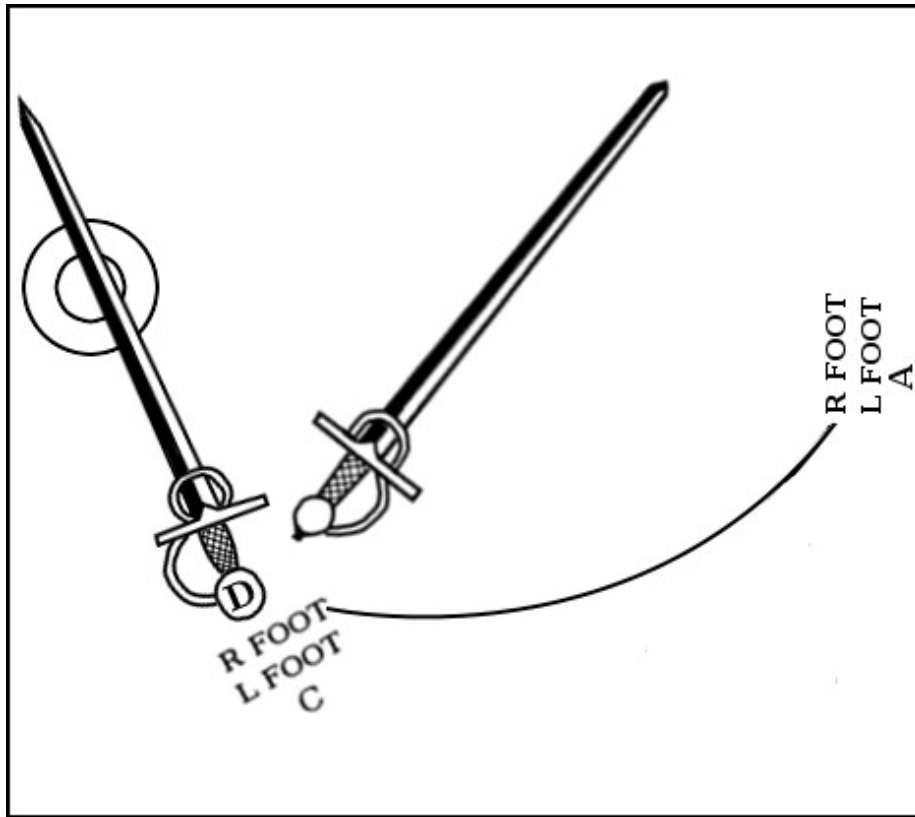


I would like to give appreciation once with such strength that it is imprinted in your memory, so that it is never forgotten, in order to manifest the great importance that the knowledge of the nature of the movements, in their beginnings, their type, and their size, is for a *diestro* (in order to be one) dealing with *destreza*, entering and leaving with safety in whatever happens. I have not found it as I desire. I will only say that it is impossible to be a *diestro* without the knowledge that we say, and it will be as impossible to defend yourself from your opponent or injure them without danger, as it would be for those blind from birth to see, or the mute to hear,⁹³ except if some miracle is worked on them.

⁹³ likely the author meant “or the deaf to hear”

The knowledge that you must have at this point has to be of three movements with which the blow is given on the sword, which are the violent, natural, and remiss. At the beginning of the natural movement, you will pass from point A to point B, freeing your sword below theirs, which by means of the remiss movement and the corner or angle that will open between your left side and their right, you will be able to free it and make use of it, occupying it and wounding them in the chest with a thrust. It has to be with much caution that the swords don't meet, because due to the strong blow that they will give, as well as due to the natural movement, they will lower to the floor. Take note that the thrust that I say can be worked in two manners: the one putting in the left foot and profiling the body, which is very rigorous, and the opponent's sword will remain subjected with yours making a superior angle above it. The other is how I have advised you, and appears in the demonstration, but this requires wounding quickly and leaving to the mean of proportion, positioning yourself straight, so that when their sword rises, it doesn't reach or injure you.

At the beginning of the natural movement,
wound them with a *revés*.

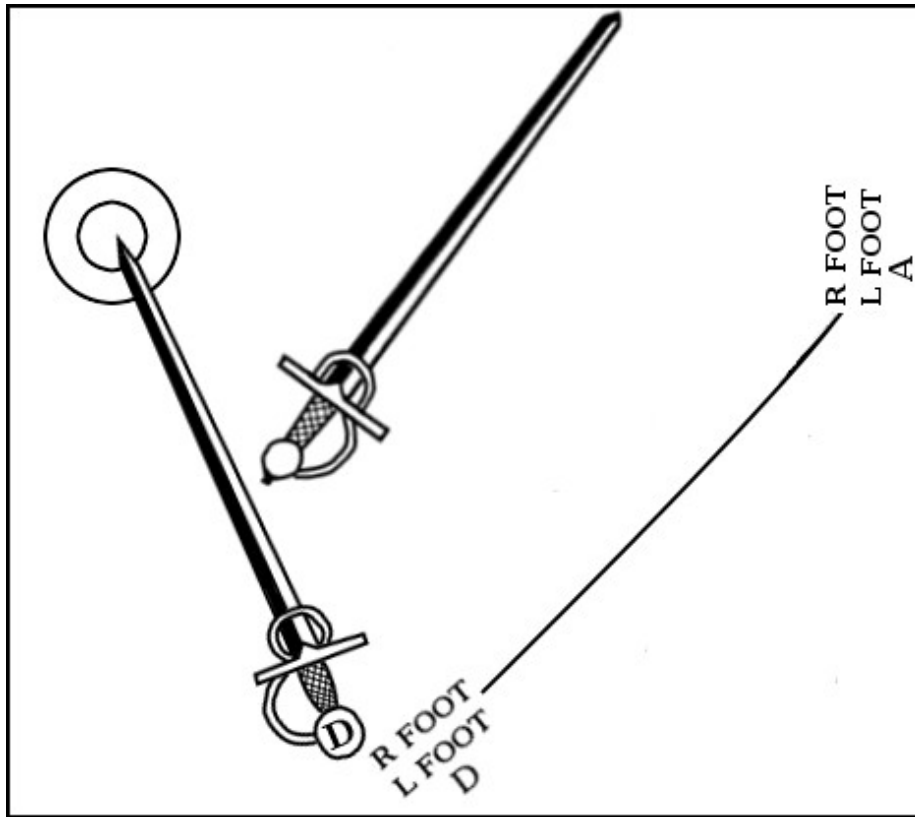


THE variety in *destreza*, and wounding in various manners, is of such pleasure that it serves as candy to the *diestro*, in order to feed on it and never be satiated by exercising it. Because you enjoy this pleasure, already knowing how to wound with a thrust according to what I have advised you, you will be able to differentiate and wound them with a *revés*. For this, you have to have the proper knowledge of the violent, natural, and remiss movements. When the opponent's sword lowers with natural movement to give the blow on yours, with the remiss movement, you will pass from point A to point C with the left foot, profiling the body, and form a *revés* that, as we have said many times, has to be close to your right thigh.

This step has to be long (or doubled) according to the distance at which your opponent will be and the step that they will give. If they will want to give the blow to the sword, being so parted by their carelessness that you cannot reach them with a step, you have to take note that it would be harmful to form a *revés* and want to give a step, because a quicker thrust would reach, if the opponent formed it. Because of that, such certain knowledge of the distances and means is necessary in order to not form the circular techniques⁹⁴ from where the thrusts have to be formed, nor the opposite. Not being a suitable mean for the *revés*, you will form the thrust that will be advised in the following demonstration. If you will form the *revés*, remember that it has to be closing to the opponent's right side, so that you can subject the sword with your left hand for your safety.

94 *tiempos*

At the beginning of the natural movement, give
a straight step and thrust.

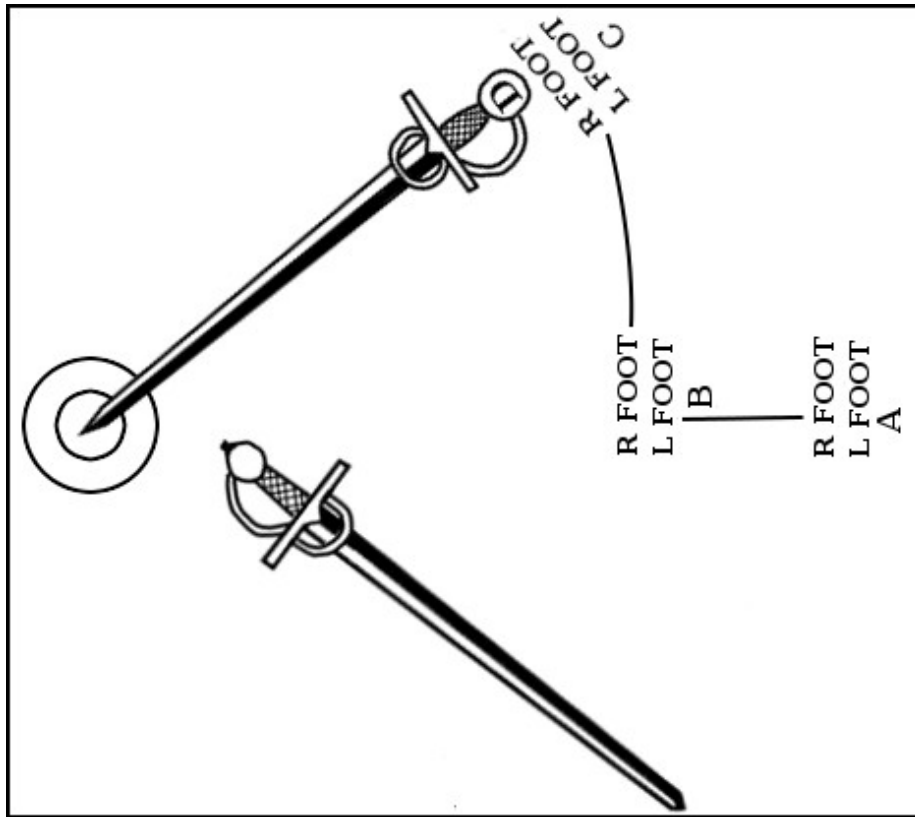


THE remiss movement is so disadvantageous for one who does it to be able to defend themselves, if the technique they started leaves them uncertain, the little diligence that is necessary in order to wound one who does it will be known if they look closely.

They place the sword that had to be their guard and shelter, and in which they justly would be able to have confidence (if they knew the true *destreza*), in a place so remote that they cannot take advantage of it, which is similar to one who makes a gate in order to guard their house and, after it is placed on the hinge, they leave it open; likewise, one who has the sword in that remiss movement that they make opens the gate so that their opponent can enter to injure them. In order to wound with the thrust, which this demonstration manifests, it is necessary to have the knowledge that we have advised: when they lower the natural movement and make the remiss, you will pass from point A to point D, giving a straight step on the line that forms the rectilinear angle, wounding them straight in the chest, freeing your sword from theirs, as I have advised you. I now advise you that this step has to be started with the left foot, being permitted with respect to that which the demonstration of the steps advises you, as the left was found to be able to make three movements: the one when we form the *revés*, another when we move back, and the last on the infinite line. This is where you have to go in order to give this strike, because if it was with the right foot, you would bring your body close, and even though the opponent's sword would be so remote, it would be able to injure you because of your delay or their great swiftness; starting the step with the left, this danger is not present.

Not wanting to follow what is proven with long experience, they deviate by a thousand uncertain paths of various and confusing opinions, which are the cause of their ruin. There is nothing to fear, as Tullius says, as among men there are more differences of spirits than of bodies, and without further arguing, we can give him the credit that his celebrated opinion deserves, seeing through experience that each one of those who deal with weapons is fond of the technique with which they are best, which is what their spirit requires. Some are fond of testing, because their spirits do not permit them to wound in another way, others who have less spirit invite their opponent, others throw many punching thrusts, others seek to knock the sword from the hand, and others, by not letting themselves reach their opponent because their spirit does not help them, throw many ripping *tajos* and *reveses*, each one being farther away from the opponent's sword and body. We have to deal with the *tajos* and declare the movements that they are composed of, which are also three, with the participation of the two angles, as we have said elsewhere. In this manner, in whatever place that they are found, they raise their arm above their head with violent movement and arrive at the obtuse angle. From there, they throw a *tajo* with great force, not to the head, but to the feet, with which they make a natural movement and lower to the acute angle, and as they deliver such force it passes to their left side, which is the remiss. In order to do it, they bend or lower their body, inclining their face to the floor, and the *revés* is formed from where the *tajo* ends, returning to where it began. Ahead, we will see the remedy against them.

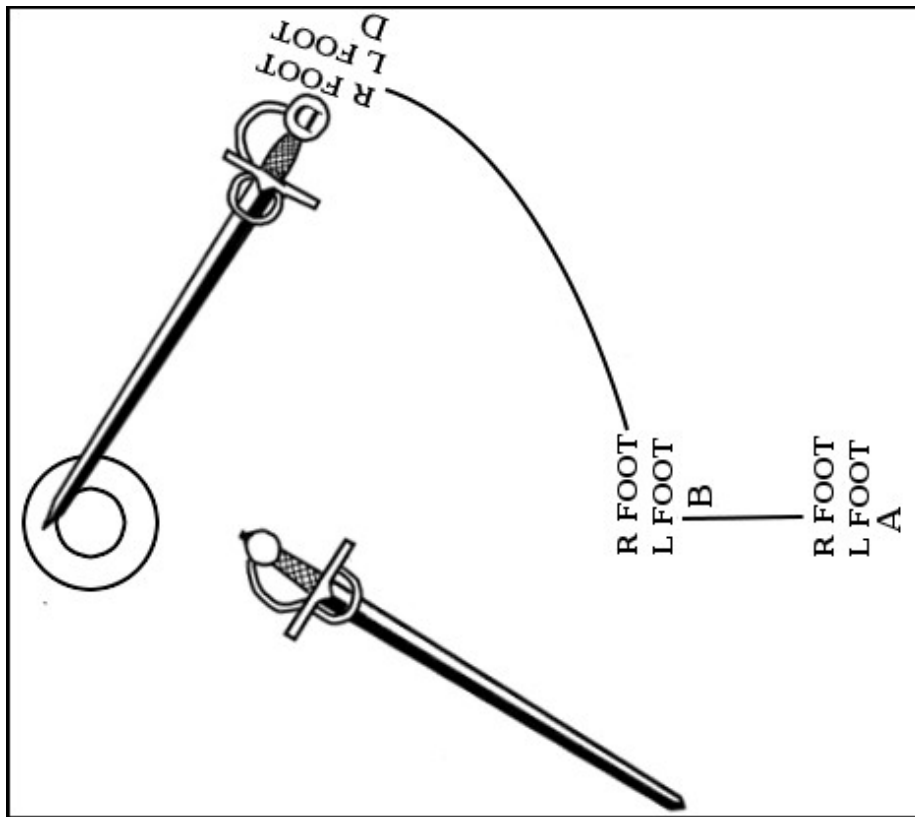
At the beginning of the *revés*, free the sword and wound with a thrust.



IGNORING the mean of proportion and the proportionate mean (which we will deal with later) and having little knowledge of the distances is the reason why the *tajo*, which they make in order to distance themselves from their opponent, puts them in danger. The reason for this will be neither very hard to understand nor obscure to consider.

Although we have given the same other times, I want to follow the opinion of Quintilian on this; he says that it is better to have too much of the superfluous than to lack the necessary. Consider that at each point it is necessary to manifest the cause of the offense and the order of the defense. As we have already said, this *tajo* is composed of three movements: violent, natural, and remiss; to free yourself from it, injuring, you have to be careful, when the natural movement will finish, and the remiss will begin passing their sword quickly to the left side, you will pass from point A to point B with a movement of straight arm and body. Because of your sword being close to their body (as we say, they do not know), if you would be able to reach to wound them in the chest with only this brief movement, do so, as the distance that they will have will manifest it in this. If they will be so remote that this movement cannot take effect, you will make a perfect attack, as already advised to you in the strike of inviting. When they return to remove your sword with the *revés*, you will pass from point B, which is where the attack finished, to point C, freeing your sword below theirs such that they do not meet, although many times it will happen to be necessary to free it above, because the *revés* that they will make will be very low, in a manner that when they passes the sword from the left side, where the *tajo* will finish, to the right side, forming a *revés*, you will pass to point C as said, giving a thrust in the chest, as this demonstration shows, without curving the arm in any way; it has to free and wound with only the movement of the wrist.

At the beginning of the *revés*, form a *tajo*.

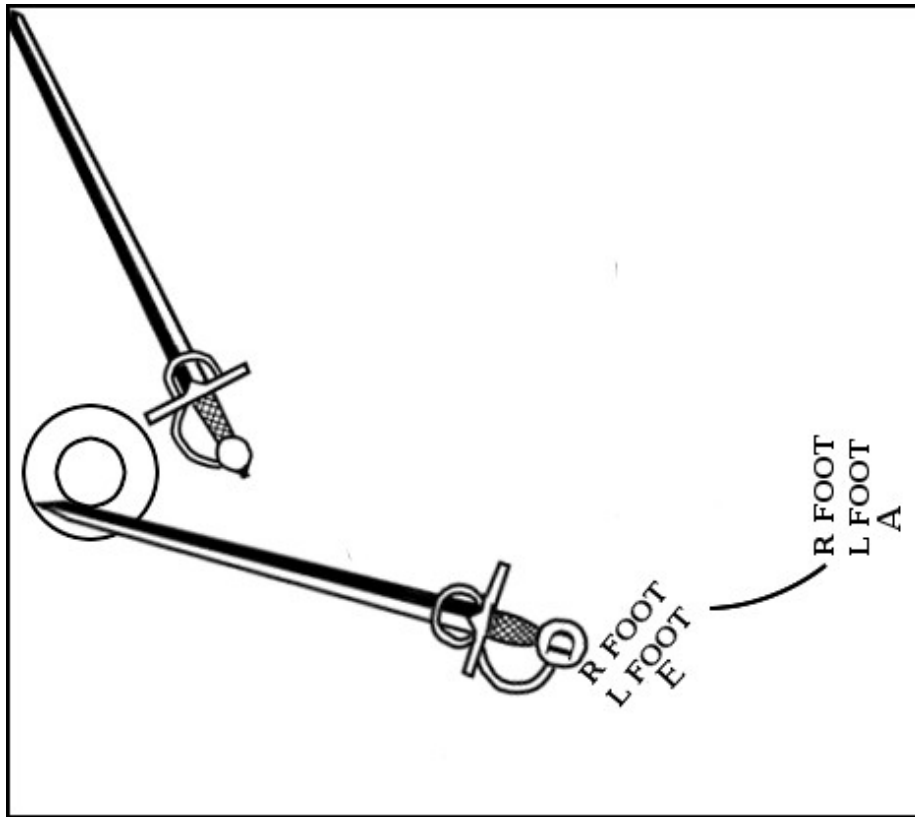


TULLIUS says that, the works of the soul being greater than those of the body, that which we do with ingenuity comes to be more agreeable than what we do with strength. This happens in this technique, in which they place all their strength in order to throw the *tajo*, and the same in the *revés*, such that the action of the force that they deliver is so large that it is impossible to stop pursuing their first intent, to which they determinedly apply it, without another new determination separating from it, so that that first will is betrayed.

Note.

I say that when they throw the *tajo* with all that force, that in the middle of it they will not be capable of changing that species from *tajo* into *revés* or thrust, by not leaving (as they do not leave) any force reserved. Nor in forming the *revés* can they reduce it to a *tajo* with their own force, as happens many times to one who runs downhill, that if they want to stop in the middle of it, it is not in their hand, nor are they lord of their own will or body in order to make it die down, rather, to their regret, they continue running, bringing that force that they first placed, until they arrive to the plain, which is the finish and end of the race. The same happens in this technique, that having started the *tajo*, applying the force to it, they are already no longer able to change it into another species without that first action being finished, and it is understood likewise with the *revés*. Then if your opponent has thrown the *tajo*, and by not having suitable distance in order to give the straight strike, you will make an attack, and when they will want to return with the *revés*, you will pass from point B to point D, forming a *tajo*, which is very certain due to the inequality of lines and steps that there will be, confirmed with much experience. As said, the force that they will deliver to the *revés*, to their regret, will have to be finished before they can return to form another movement in their defense. When they returns, it will be so delayed that they will not have a remedy, so it is certain that a degree of skill is worth more than ten degrees of strength. In this, the work of ingenuity will be shown, so that it will defeat such inconsiderate movements with ease.

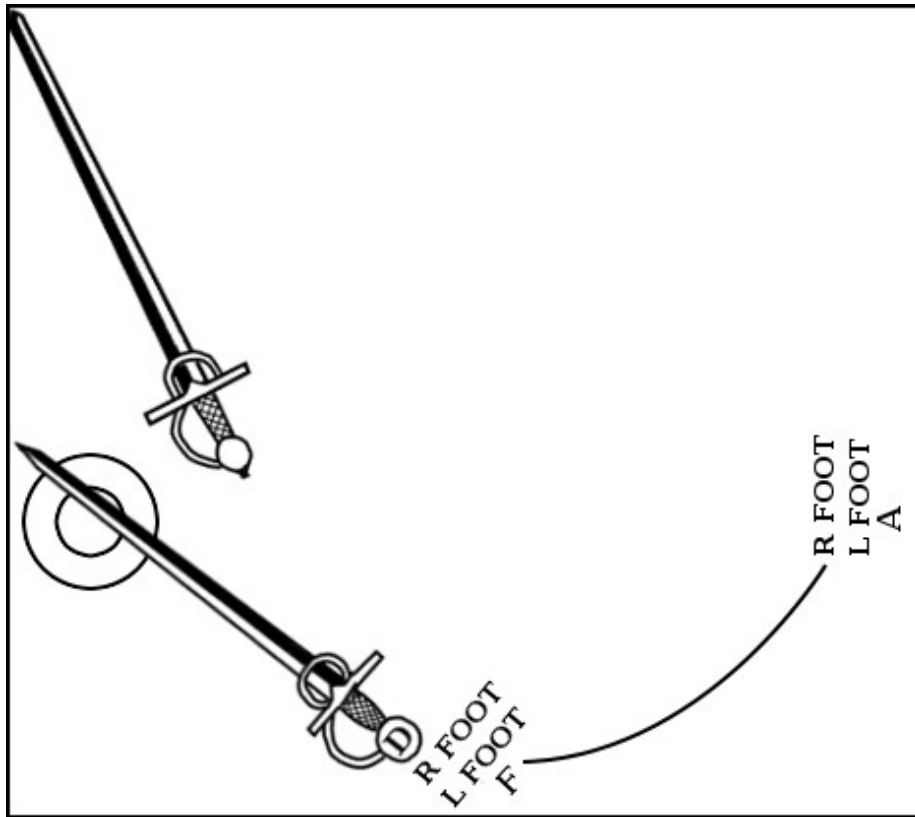
At the beginning of the *tajo* and remiss movement, wound with a thrust.



THE various and certain ways that this science teaches us to be free from whichever strikes that the opponent will form are excellent and worthy of great esteem. It is not only by one part nor only one way, but so diverse, and all with such measure and strange artifice, that we will be able to say that it is for the righteousness of all people: high and low, cholerick and phlegmatic, cowardly and brave, and also for whichever strike: *tajo*, *revés*, thrust, or cut, attack or deviation, and all the rest, because it is over all.

In the end, as universal lord, it teaches us and trains our defense, and the injury of the opponent. As a scientist in it, if you will want to differentiate in the strike against the *tajo* that we deal with, not being content with having wounded them as we have advised, know that you have two other ways to wound them. If you will make use of the beginning of the remiss movement with diligence, with the natural already finished, you will pass from point A to point E giving a curved step, and from there you will be able to wound them with a thrust in the chest. Because of the long path that the opponent's sword makes, with which it stays remote, you will be able to wound them without danger. If they wanted to return to throw their *revés*, they will come to participate in the acute angle, and as your strike and arm have to be straight, even if you had remained, it would be impossible to reach you to injure, because of what we had already proven, that the right angle reaches more. If the *revés* was to the high part, it will be necessary to free the sword below, as advised in the technique of *arrebatar*, and wound with *tajo* or thrust, with the step being different.

At the beginning of the ripping *tajo* and remiss movement, form a *revés*.



IN this last strike, we will be able to ground ourselves in what Geronimo de Carranza says on folio 30, that any movement, however strong that it may be, is measured with another movement more agile than it. This will serve so that the furious and angry *tajo* that the opponent will throw does not intimidate the spirit, nor does seeing it formed with such rash impulse scare you, as you have a remedy in order to leave without danger.

You have to understand the application of this argument in this manner (although there are many others) when your opponent will make that *tajo*, in which they will apply all their force so inconsiderately, and being at a distance capable of reaching them with only one movement, you will have much warning. When the natural movement has lowered, and their sword passed in front of your body, making a remiss movement, you will quickly pass from point A to point F, making use of the beginning of the remiss movement. Having the arm straight, you will form a *revés* in the head, without entering more than enough to reach them with four fingers of the sword, as by the inequality of lines that there will be, in forming the *tajo*, you will form your *revés*, and you will be able to wound them as we advised another time. When they form a *revés*, you form and wound him with a *tajo*, as you will also be able to do at this point. Wanting to wound with the *revés* that I said, if for some reason they will impede it or form a parry or deviation, convert it into a *tajo*, executing it in the left side of their head. Here, the step of feet will have to correspond to the type of blow, with this advice, that in the first *revés* having to be executed in the right side, the step that you have to give has to be on the left side of the circumference, and when you will have to wound with a *tajo*, the step will have to be on the right side. It is very clear that with the inequality with which you will work, their sword will never encounter you, as when it will be parted to their left side, you will go to the right, forming a *revés*, and when they will bring it to the right, your step will be to their left side, avoiding running into it. This is enough for this point, so that for the rest that can be done, exercise will make it so easy that what this lacks will not be missed.

They do many other techniques, which one would be able to pursue and make a grand volume of, and by not tiring you or me in things of such little import, I remit them to your understanding, as with the telling and the exercise, considering the order given up to here, you will impede the rest, as they are those of less importance. Although there are three that you will rarely see a person who deals with weapons dare to make public as a *diestro*, but knows them and only in theory will manifest them so clearly that the demonstrations are not missed. The first is, being positioned, wanting to wound the right foot of their opponent; I say wound because they maintain that it is a wound, or at least that they will that it is, and that which I have seen isn't but a tiny blow, that if the edge of the sword with which they give it was the point of an awl, it would not break the shoe. They pursue this with such caution that you will see them give a thousand turns, seeking time and awaiting an occasion in order to do their celebrated technique. Leaving this point here, as in others, its danger has been declared, but by complying with the style and order started, I will point some out. The demonstration of the three angles, where we prove the right angle reaches most, absolves this difficulty with only understanding that when the sword lowers in order to hit the foot, it comes to be placed on the floor, which is point D of said demonstration, which reaches less than the right angle by two-thirds, as the line that lowers from point B to point D shows. Not obviating this advantage, there is another much greater, although unknown, that in order to wound in the foot, they incline the body and arrive to the opposing sword.

Three famous strikes of the vulgar.

First technique.

So if your opponent will want to wound in the foot, you will be defended by only being straight, without making some diligence on your part that they will wound themselves with what they will do intending to wound. If the truth has to be believed, I tell you that it has been experienced more times in truth, and in competence, than this chapter has letters. As they wouldn't be able to prevail with it, sometimes they would put the blame on the delay with which they would do it, others on the sword, and others on the arm, without ever wanting to be persuaded in public, nor to confess the true cause of it, because there are some of such obstinate spirit that they would rather die in the dark and gloomy jail of ignorance than live in the agreeable liberty of science. However, they walk where they want, they confess or deny that which they will like, as the Castillian refrain says: All has to be kicking against the goad.⁹⁵

Second
technique of
slapping.

The other esteemed lesson, used much more than the first, is being positioned with their opponent, to go assuring him until it seems to them a suitable time, and then they extend the left arm, giving a slap to the point of the sword, and putting in the left foot they throw a very strong punching thrust, which if they reached a person with it, even though it is with a practice sword, they would kill them, because they apply all their force to it without any consideration. It is rarely executed, because the fear that some have is such that in knowing that their adversary wants to do it, they place an amount of diligence in moving back. The veneration that they have of it, and the confidence that they place in it, originates from this, which appears to one who knows it that (as they say) it's like clockwork.

95 Acts 26:14

That which is more notable, which has happened, a *diestro* (in their way) went to fight with another that was not, for whom they had pity for what was going to happen. Coming to the occasion, in half an hour, the one who was less skilled didn't do anything other than throw punching thrusts, and delayed with them until the seconds came in and found the *diestro* confused at having taken advantage of his *destreza* so poorly, giving as an excuse: what could he have done, if the other had thrown so many punching thrusts. Worst of all is that they admitted this apology as such, conceding that it was reasonable, that against fast punching thrusts, there could be no parry. Although our author, after having abhorred this technique (as he should) in the dialog of the false *destreza*, gives equivalent reasons to satisfy those that will proceed without passion, I will give my opinion referring to his in all, and I do it by advising the way of their remedy. This slap (or kick) is done with a movement separate from that which forms the strike, and this strike is composed of another movement, and time is necessary for each one of them, and it will not be so small that the time at which they can be remedied ceases being known. You will be able to do it if your opponent will want to wound you along with the slap, taking note when they will give it, their body is close to your sword, and their sword is cut short. They give this slap downward from close to the face, and knowing this movement, you will free the sword so that the hand doesn't meet it, giving a thrust in the chest above their left arm, having the arm straight, leaving the diligence of the slap in vain, because they must not find it.

A thing that happened.

Excuse of the brave and skilled.

Vulgar opinion.

Note.

In order to give the strike, they have to give a curved step to their left side, which corresponds to your right side, in case at that point it will be thrown with their punching thrust which, by the carelessness with which they do it, they will come to look to where you were before.

And if you wanted to vary, you will be able to not give the thrust, and when they want to give theirs, give a blow on the sword and from there form a double technique,⁹⁶ or a cut to the head, giving the proper step, or many other remedies that we will advise in the true *destreza*, which you will be able to apply.

Third
technique of
brazal.

Although the *brazal*⁹⁷ has been left for last (appearing forgotten) it is not the technique that they esteem least, nor do least, nor even trust least to bring victory, making it instead (it seems to me) one of the best and most celebrated, which they make use of in the greatest necessities. They celebrate one who comes to do it with some gallantry, say that they are a singular person in the techniques and above all, extreme in the *brazal*, which is the same as saying of that he is a Plato in philosophy, or a Baldo in law. I have a certain kind of shame in finding such just cause of speaking badly of all, because it will be understood that it is a particular passion of mine to be a detractor of others' works. I want to fall on such abominable vice when the reasons that will be given are not true testimony, and it convinces whichever dispassionate understanding. I rely on the opinion of our author, who says that all the techniques that are in the will of the opponent are false, and the end of them doubtful, and they are not always reached, because the event depends on the other's will, and this (which is unknown) will not easily subject it.

Carranza, fol.
119

96 *treta doble*

97 Named after a piece of armor which covers the arm.

This is reserved for the *diestro* who will do it, with certain and true *destreza*, who will be able to obligate one to make some movement, in order to injure them by means of it. Although it appears that these two points are similar, as each one waits for the opponent to make a movement in order to wound, it is with two differences on the part of the *diestro*. The one is that when they want to wound with second intention, which is by means of displacing the opponent's movement in such form, and making use of such mean, and having the distance so decided, that one gains that which they lack the capability to do to their opponent who leaves to their purpose, by wounding them in another place when they will not want to leave. One who deals with the ordinary *destreza* lacks this, so that if they test the opponent's sword in order to wound, by means of the movement that they will make, if one who is tested doesn't leave to their intent, the artifice of their technique is thwarted. The other that the *diestro* has is that if the movement that they wait for happens as they want, they gives their strike without any danger. This is the opposite in the others, that when a person was determined and wanted to attend to their intent, the strike that they will give, as they lack the certain knowledge that science teaches (and dealing with them in distance or mean of proportion, or proportionate mean, will be the reason why they ask one who will have said it, if it is from Prester John of India, or they born in the Antipodes, since it will appear strange to them), they don't nor will they be able to have certainty in anything, as they do not have it in the *brazal*, which they compose and do in two or three ways. One is testing the sword in the middle, and when they free it in order to wound in the face, they put in their arm, gathering the opponent's sword on the arm, putting in the left foot, giving a punching thrust.

Preeminence of
the *diestro*.

How the *brazal*
is composed.

How the <i>brazal</i> is composed in another way.	The other is composed in a different way, crossing the sword on the outside of the opponent's sword, putting in the left foot and arm, and taking the sword below the opponent's right, they give the punching thrust in the chest, having the sword gathered on the arm and high, in order to be able to pass to do their technique.
How the <i>brazal</i> is composed in another way.	When they test the sword, if the opponent forms some <i>mandoble</i> , they form the parry with the arm, which they come prepared for, armed with some half-armband of mail or flat steel, or at least some boards, and then they give the thrust. Although it is formed in other diverse manners, in the end it comes down to putting in the arm in the same way. In the first they are founded badly, because having their sword so close to the opponent's body, in that reason it fits, that putting in the left arm and foot, for which they necessarily have to deviate the right, because both cannot be close, and in deviating it they cut short the sword, aside from spending much time in the movement that they do for the <i>brazal</i> as well as for the deviation.
Objection against the <i>brazal</i> .	In this time, one who will do it could be injured in many places with this consideration. If it will happen that when they will test your sword, waiting for you to leave to wound them in order to make their <i>brazal</i> , at the point that they put it to work, you will free the sword so that the arm doesn't meet it, making a half circle in this form: 3, giving a strike below their own left arm, due to having it so close by means of the step that they gave with the left foot, and the sword so distant that when they understand what they caught, yours will be able to wound them in the chest; for this, moving back until seeking the mean will be necessary.
Note.	

You can do this easily because their sword comes to remain in the acute angle. You will also be able to wound them while they are waiting for your movement that (according to what they wants) has to be to the face, making an attack to them, and when they want to throw the *brazal*, form a *tajo* to the head and arm, moving back a little, seeking the mean. When they wear the boards on the arm, the strike, by being natural, will wound them in such a manner despite it, and more if the strike is given to their hand. This is the reason why many have the left arm mangled and the hands run through, because they have been an aficionado of this demonic *brazal* and damned slap. If the impetus and force with which it is thrown will be such that you will not be able to defeat him with the step back that you will give, having formed the *tajo*, and they will want to give their thrust, you will be able to stop the execution to the head and attend to impeding the strike, which you will be able to do by giving the blow on the sword that you had to give in the head and wounding from there. This will be when there isn't time for everything. Note.

The other that is composed of making the attack on the outside has its own strikes, and doesn't differ in more than the opponent making their *brazal* by means of your movement, or making it without it, by only making the attack. Although you have another strike, knowing how to take advantage of the beginning of it: when they make the attack on the outside of your sword, you will be able, giving curved step on the circumference to your left side, to form a *revés* to the head which, because of taking the sword from the front of your body, you will be able to injure them with said strike. Note.

With this, the treatment of the false *destreza* is finished, so that being knowledgeable of the true, there will be no point which you cannot attend to, as you know how to apply it.

The reason why this third part is given.

Aristotle

Avenruiz

Why examples
are given.

Carranza, fol.
64

Because in all I imitate our author Geronimo de Carranza and the style that he brings in his book, I want to show the reason why the ordinary *destreza* was placed at the beginning, if we plainly confess that it is false, and we argue it with provable reasons and demonstrations. In summary, the intent of both is that which Aristotle says in the tenth of the Prior Analytics, that many times examples are given so that those who learn, or those one wants to persuade, know that which they are told better. As the famous doctor Avenruiz says on the second book of *De Anima*⁹⁸ about examples: the verification of the thing is not sought, but the manifestation of it. So that this is certain, it is suggested in that which Carranza wrote, where he gives the example that the Spartans would intoxicate their servants so that their sons and young nobles, seeing such abominable and awkward vice, abhorred it and followed the honest path, as Plutarch refers to it.

⁹⁸ Averroes (or Ibn Rushd) was a 12th century philosopher wrote a long commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*.

Seeing that they have not wanted to flee from unconsidered frivolity due to a dull and low opinion invented by men of dull and low understanding (that having proven with such certainty in demonstrations, as well as examples, gives me liberty that I may give to my pen, which publicly says that which I feel about it and them), my example is that they rush confused and blindly to their more-than-false appearances of truth, and that they truly love the causes of their own harm, as if they would do it certainly to their advantage. Because of this (considering that which Titus Livius says, that the past is easier to reprehend than amend), I have sought to publish and give to the world in painting and drawing, clearly and without metaphors, even down to the thoughts. Although I have signified the false idol of their *destreza* with as much care as I could, I would want it to be done by the celebrated brush of Apelles and the singular genius of Lysippos, the only ones who were granted license by public edict for being able to paint and draw King Alexander, because this was considered suitable for the greatness of such a grand prince, so that he would be painted so lively, with colors and hues so proportionate, that it would last as long as there would be people. The techniques that they do (offspring engendered by their own confusion and deceit), as well as the growls, mannerisms, visages, and gestures that twist the mouth, bare the teeth, open the eyes, the disheartened snorts, the sweats, the unrest, the twists to one side and turns to the other that bend and twist the body, that in his time the Italian Harlequin did not surpass, so that each one could see their own figure, actions, and mannerisms, so that they would be ashamed of being buffoons, in movements or steps of feet as well as in the bodily gibberish.

Titus Livius

Who had
license to paint
Alexander.

What the
vulgars do in
order to do
their
techniques.

Note this.

They have not seen it, even though Carranza manifested it, giving them a mirror in which they could see themselves; what has happened to them is what ordinarily happens with crystalline mirrors, as whatever is seen in them looks good. This is the reason why we see ourselves very measured and composed, because if we will look at ourselves laughing, talking, eating, walking, fighting, and complaining, each would see their defect, and when it appears good or bad. Thus, they don't have to see themselves measured, because the mirror only represents the perfect figure of one who looks at themselves. They look at themselves with each one of the referred mannerisms and will be afraid of being seen, such that from here it happens that they live with themselves so deceived, that they don't want to be disillusioned or see defects in themselves, and likewise that they defend their own, hating and reviling the others. So what is this but seeing publicly the defect that the other makes public, but then as they come to look at the mirror, each one imagines themselves so composed and serious without a second, this presumption being that which harms them, because one who presumes more knows less, and one who knows more presumes less. With this they will come to know of the falsity that they profess, and what is false, I prove and say: that which deprives us of certainty is truly false. *Destreza* is founded in science, and it is certain that what they profess deprives them of it – it necessarily follows that it has to be false, and it will be so as much as it deprives them of greater certainty. The true *destreza* teaches one person to scientifically defend themselves from another; that which they follow doesn't defend them, rather it is the reason that they kill them (as happens every day). One can understand without any doubt that it is false and without any scientific foundation.

One who
presumes more
knows less.

That which
deprives us of
the truth is
false.

Although a doubt or question is offered here, that those that profess the false *destreza* will be able to do on its behalf, saying what is the reason (if it is false, as we say) why they sometimes succeed with their techniques and execute them, as truly, two opponents as serious as certainty and falsehood don't belong together. One responds to this with the authority of Plato and Aristotle, who say that all that which is done is either by nature, by art, or by chance. This last is the solution to this doubt and from where it proceeds that some of their techniques sometimes come to certain and true execution, not placing on their part more than the instrumental arm, because for the rest, they don't know how it is done or for what reason it is done, that happenstance is the true inventor of it, and also because that which is dealt with many times sometimes succeeds against those that have never been instructed in the one or in the other, and also because of that which Geronimo de Carranza says, that if they are sometimes successful, it is by error, and the most principal cause is the carelessness of the opponent. However, the excellence, artifice, and certainty of the true *destreza* are such that I would have to be an ingrate if, in whatever occasion that happens (which will be many), I did not trumpet its grand works. Although I know well that as much as I say in praise, even if it would be (as it cannot be) with as much elegance as the ordinary deserves, like a diviner, publicizing even the intimate secrets of its damaged entrails, it will not achieve my intent, because there are men that, in order to believe the truth, have calluses on their heart.

Doubt on the part of the false *destreza*.

Solution of the doubt.

Carranza, fol. 144

With this I give a general proclamation on the part of its own certainty that I have manifested, that with time if they will not leave the confused and dark ways of the vulgar and false *destreza*, that in the time when they have no remedy, they reluctantly have to suffer the pain that their malicious guilt will deserve. If they looked considerately, it would have been enough that others received what they had suffered, and that they had learned their lesson, because there is nothing as effective to keep us from blame as having the punishment for it in memory. Although it is considered good that the people in particular for whom this book is made, who are of noble, discrete, and honored spirit, will not only leave the false *destreza*, but they will be its rigorous scourge in order to banish it. With this said and well-employed, I will give my work, and much more than would have suffered.

Particular advice in which it is declared with
what weapon one can defend themselves most
easily.

WHOMEVER will be guided by the diversity of opinions of such little agreement and even less consideration that those who want to become new inventors of the *destreza* have given, and do give, neither will their understanding rest nor their spirit reach that interior peace that those who are guided by scientific principles have and enjoy, and by means of those, they reach the true solution to what they deal with.

The example we have at hand, as rarely will we meet two masters (although they are examined) that come to deal with *destreza*, who between them there is not a thousand competencies, each one wanting to favor their techniques, and manifest them as best, from which it can be inferred that there is certainty in none, as the one doesn't know the other's, nor do all consist of some principles. If we had wanted to say something in favor of some of these, we might ask each one which is the best of those they say. One great injustice amazes me, as philosophy being the same in Spain as in Flanders, and mathematics being so certain, which is practiced in all places, and arithmetic as certain in one province as in another, and truly all the other things that have scientific foundation are all in one kingdom as in another, and though they differ in language, the sense is not changed – this wretched *destreza*, which they want to make adulterous, as if it didn't make use of its own certainty as the others, as is said. I do not say that this difference is from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another, or from one city to another, but from one street to another, and from one house to another, and even from one *diestro* to another, being face to face, practicing the same thing: what is *destreza*, which none of them know what it deals with (in the opinion of another who deals with it). They don't argue over who studied more and reached greater secrets of it, but each one says that what the other knows is false, and their techniques trivial, because they didn't know how to give three counters to one of the defended thrusts. Oh poor and wretched *destreza* – but I say it badly, that this name is not theirs, nor do we call it such, but we call it Babel, which is the same as confusion, as such diverse men have wanted to build it.

Name owed to
the false
destreza.

Question and
opinion of the
diestros, about
which weapon
is best.

Because this is already tiresome, and as much as is said, even more can be said, we leave it and deal with that which is more to our purpose. It is a very contested question: which genus of weapon is the best for wounding as well as for defending? As it has not been determined, there are various opinions, each one maintaining that which seems best to them. Some have said the round shield, because it is a covering arm and is important for the parries of the head and covering the chest. Another contradicts the first and says that the buckler is the best, and it was founded on it seeming best to them. Another contradicts these two, saying that the sword and cloak is above all, because it serves to cover, surround the arm, and encloak the enemy, as if they were a bull. Others say that the sword and dagger brings a thousand advantages, because also being crossed, they make the parries for the head. Finally, each one gives their opinion, and it is not clear and distinctly known why one is good and the other not so, except because those who favor them do well with them. Hearing these opinions, you will not enjoy yourself or be neutral without knowing how to determine what opinion to follow, I will declare them as best as I will be able. Beginning with the sword and cloak, which the ordinary opinion has introduced as very good for the defense of a person, persuading with appreciations it is of great importance for parries, manifesting this with appearances more worthy of derision and laughter than any credit.

I would not dare to ask that it be given to my reasons, when I would not have on my side one that Geronimo de Carranza gives by way of objection, that one who makes a parry with the cloak is in great danger whenever they will form it, and in particular if it is done when the adversary can reach with the point of the sword. From which, it will happen very much to the contrary of their intention, as in place of the parry, they will leave with injury, without their opponent having it, nor even danger of it. If they had wanted to dispassionately scrutinize the cause, they will know it easily and come to understand that in those circular movements that they make with the arm in order to wrap the cloak on it, that they apply the greater part of their attention there, which is one of the foundations of this science, and that the sword is not accompanied by it, in order to apply a strike, and that one will not be able to give it and wrap the cloak around the arm at the same time, because each one of these movements necessarily requires separate time. Besides, those movements and turns that they give with the cloak in order to wrap it around the arm are circular, and many times they come to cover the sight at the time that they pass in front of the face giving the turn, and they will not be able to leave well from this. Then if their opponent had the mean to wound, they would be able by only giving a step on the circumference to the right, to execute the strike below the arm which has the cloak, without there being a place to impede it, as the sight (by which they would have to have true notice and knowledge of the strike that is formed against them) is impeded by the interposition that the cloak makes between the two bodies. We move on and come to the rigor of all and say that one who has the cloak, rather than coming to their opponent, has it wrapped around the arm, by which said danger ceases, and they want to make use of the parries, which is their particular intent, they will find that they suffer the same danger for two reasons which come to produce the same effect.

Carranza, fol.
120

Carranza, fol.
27

We place it in question: one who is found with the sword moves circularly, forming a *tajo*, which we already know travels to the head, and one with the cloak guided by an unjust hope says that they want to receive a strike on the cloak, that when much will be at the expense of three or four folds of it, and a thrust will remain, which is the most generally practiced today. I say that its harm is in this confidence alone, and it is the reason that the *diestro* never forms *tajos*, *reveses*, or thrusts in which they apply all their strength without leaving some reserved with much consideration, in order to apply it (in the necessity that is offered) according to what will result from the first. If the occasion will dispose it, they will be able to change intent, making use of that which Geronimo de Carranza says, that thrusts are formed from the end of the *tajos* with little diligence on the part of the *diestro*. Seeing that their first intent has to be impeded by means of the parry, and this comes to cover their sight as we have said, placing the cloak in front of the eyes, at that time, taking advantage of that force that they kept for greater necessity, they will form said thrust, aside from the universal remedy remaining to them, which will be dealt with ahead. We conclude by saying that when it was necessary for the *diestro* to make use of the cloak for some reason, helping the sword with it, they give to each one the role that it will be able to do well, without forcing either to do the other, giving only the deviation to the cloak, as our author says, leaving the parries, attacks, and strikes for the sword, as for the cloak, what we said is enough.

Carranza, fol.
163

The role of the
cloak and
sword.

Carranza, fol.
158

Doing the opposite would be commanding the cloak to wound and the sword to deflect, being wrapped around the arm. The sword and shield will have to be dealt with, as it is so celebrated in the world. Although that which will be said in truth is in fact truth – it doesn't have to be pleasing, due to the great faith that they have in it. I don't contradict this, because any arm is good if one knows how to use it well, giving its suitable mean, not forcing it to do more than what it will legitimately be able to do. I understand well that although people of excellent understanding will deal with this matter, there would be no advantage in persuading them of the certainty, as there was no benefit in it being said by our author. In my opinion, the reason is that which Pliny the younger said, that a received opinion is uprooted with great difficulty. However, one values that which they will value, and I have to say that which experience dictates to me with much certainty; if they will believe it, good, and if not, experience will take great care to make them believe it, despite the incredulous. The particular intent of those that use the shield is to cover the chest and favor the head with the parries, and for the thrusts, to ensure that the sword pierces it, in order to injure safely. For this reason, they customarily wield bucklers of cork, because in throwing their fearsome punching thrusts, the buckler is given to the thrusts, and as they cannot change that force that they deliver (as said), they nail the sword into the buckler or shield. Most times it is the cause of their death, or at least the loss of the sword. So with the *diestro*, it will happen to the contrary, as they will form the strikes in the uncovered place, and when they want to give the shield to some thrust in order to achieve their intent, it will go otherwise.

Sword and shield.

What the *diestro* will do against the shield.

Carranza, fol.
163. At the end
of the *tajos*, the
thrusts are
formed.

Note.

There is no
instantaneous
movement.

So the action of the force arriving, measured according to the disposition and distance that there will be from body to body, the *diestro* will change intent and form a *tajo* in that instant, as our author says: at the end of the thrusts, the *tajos* and *reveses* are formed. On the contrary, one will form a *tajo*, and when very confident that they go to make the parry with their shield, one will convert it into a thrust, by only making the violent movement lose some of the force that had been delivered, or by delaying the opposing movement, giving a curved step on the circumference to the right, giving the strike below the shield arm (leaving aside its principal remedy, because if it had to be dealt with would make an epilogue of all the techniques). With the one with the sword able to do all that was said, the doubt is not very intricate, nor the solution very difficult. First, because the shield is so large, and the movements that are done with it are so long and slow that there would be room to wound and prevent the remedy. When the movements would be short, as any movement necessarily has to have a mover, and this has to be the body and arm, and time has to be spent on this movement, because none is instantaneous, the *diestro* will know and convert some blows into others however is suitable; the shield will go in continuous movement because when they will begin to form some parry, the sword will already leave with a very contrary strike and will wound with straight thrust, being able to do this with more velocity than the shield. When one wants only this, and not to wound them, one will tire and discourage in such form that without having made effect, it will be necessary for them to retreat.

When one will want to wound, they will be able to do it without being seen or remedied by the one with the shield, as with the parries that they will make covering the head being so large, they will not leave the sight so free, nor the chest so covered, that one will not be wounded before the shield lowers, due to the speed that the natural movement has, as said. It has to be understood likewise with the buckler, although not with such rigor, by being smaller and more agile, but in the end no one will take away from the *diestro* that having formed a *tajo*, in seeing the parry made with the buckler, they can cease giving it to the buckler and give it in the arm that holds it, which cannot be covered due to being smaller than the shield. Because in the book that is promised, all this has to be dealt with copiously, advising how one who will wield whatever genus of arms (as it is more than the sword) has to be, and also the role of each one, so that no one is deceived by the danger that can be offered; I refer you there. The sword and dagger that one carries, which are almost ordinary, are plainly and knowingly seen to be important for one's defense, more than the others referred to, for many well-founded reasons, because the dagger (according to our author) serves to make deviations and take into its charge some of the lesser parries. Many times it even helps to wound, exchanging roles – the dagger wounding, and the sword parrying or deviating. Finally, these are offensive and defensive arms, and the circles that are made with the hand are smaller and quicker than with the cloak, shield, or buckler, and it doesn't make the impediment to the sight that the others do, in order to know the opponent's determinations.

Sword and dagger, ordinary arms.

Carranza, fol. 158

Many times the sword and dagger change roles.

With which
arm one can
defend
themselves
most easily.

From here it will come to be inferred that a person will defend themselves from one with sword and cloak more easily than one with sword and buckler, due to the movements and deviations as well as parries being smaller and less impediment to the sight. One will defend themselves more easily from one who wields a shield than one with the small or large buckler because of the slow movements and the other referred things. One will defend themselves more easily from the buckler than from the sword and dagger because of both being able to wound, according to the place that one who wields it will be found. One will be less cautious of one who will wield a long sword than one with a short sword because of how much weakness it has, according to the length that it adds. The *diestro* will be able to defend themselves and injure the tall man with less caution than the short, and the reason for that is declared in the particular point of knowing the complexions, not because each of them ceases making use of their particular mean. What was touched on in dealing with the differences of each of these will be said in the second book that, our lord being served, will come to light if they will remove the fear of this, by making the reception deserved by the intention with which I offer it. In this, we will deal with the sword alone, which Geronimo de Carranza honors such that he calls it a person's faithful companion, because without favor or help from any other, it makes its attacks, parries, and strikes against all the other arms and defends one without anything lacking. It was very just that the sword enjoyed this particular privilege, because a person is not always found with dagger, shield, or buckler, and even many are found without cloak.

Carranza, fol.
158

In particular, those in the military, having lost the arquebus or pike (if unarmored),⁹⁹ are found with only the sword, and with it alone they will be able to work marvelous effects in *destreza*, as will be seen in this book and the promised one. He wanted only that people were dissatisfied with their own opinion and were left guided by reason, not passion, because the will that would be guided by it cannot have a good end. With this they will see clearly who it is that they love so truly, as things that are founded on false foundations are such that the more they are looked at, the more defects are found in them. However, that which is certain and true, which consists of scientific principles and foundations, always lasts with a stable and firm being, without ever changing its firmness, in truth or in jest, in haste or in slowness, because what is good doesn't need many words to praise it, since the truth speaks for itself. This is enough, and when they will not want to render its credit with all these persuasions, consider that it is from prudent people, not looking to that which they know, as much as to that which they don't know, and they are not similar to those who would want to marry the chaste Penelope, and in not being able to reach her, were wed to some of her maidservants, and were content with this. They work to reach the chaste and beautiful true *destreza*, and are not content with the dirty cook of the false *destreza*, and they consider that the understanding that is occupied in useless and baseless arts is so badly employed, and agree with that celebrated saying of Quintilian, which says that the continuous work will be lost if nothing better than what has passed could be found.

⁹⁹ *si es seca* – the term *pica seca* refers to a light pikeman without torso armor, possibly with a helmet.

Carranza, fol. 162, 168, and 37
 Carranza, fol. 2

Before we enter into the particulars of the true *destreza*, I want to advise you of that which Geronimo de Carranza pressed in all the discourse of his book, so that the strikes come to true effect. This is the proportionate mean, which as he says in his declaration, is the determined distance that each species of strike has in all the arms. There are four species or differences of strikes: *tajo*, *revés*, thrust, and cut, and many branches are derived from these; thus each one requires its proportionate mean in order to achieve the principal intent, which is to wound without being wounded. It is that with which the *diestro* will be free from danger; it is that which measures the long or short movements, of whichever species that they are. As well, the mean of proportion is a certain knowledge of the opponent's weapon, whether long or short, and without them saying it, the *diestro* measures it with such certainty that they cannot fail. From this knowledge then comes asking one's understanding what blow has to be applied according to the length of the weapons or the body. Thus the proportionate mean is a disposition with which the effect of one's determination is reached and achieved without impediment. I say without impediment, as when the opponent's body, which is the object of the strike, is disposed for it and doesn't make movement backward with such speed that we almost give it the name of fleeing, which in such case will not be a fault on the part of the *diestro*, nor the science, but the fault of the disposition of the object. As Carranza says, the role of the physician is to heal, if the body is capable of it; thus the *diestro* will wound if the opponent is disposed.

Carranza, fol. 37

Although, the opponent will not always be able (after the *diestro* has chosen their proportionate mean) to retreat back with such speed that taking advantage of the beginning of the movement, one doesn't comprehend it, reach, and wound, because the proportionate mean is a distance so determined and measured, a place and site in which the *diestro* places themselves in order to injure their opponent. It is the just measure of their movement, not worked by chance, but with much certainty. It is a place and state in which the *diestro* has caught all the paths and lanes that the opponent can take to wound, so that they don't go without a wound. Even though the movement that they will make may be very fast (as turning the face is not), they will be reached as said, because the step that they will give backward will be violent and uncertain, and that which is given in order to wound them is natural. I will prove that all that was said is founded on reason with some manual examples, applying them to the proportionate mean. If two were positioned with equal swords, so distant that only their points reach, and the one wanted to wound with a *tajo* or a cut, it is clear that it would have no effect, due to not having chosen the mean, and the opponent's sword would be so free that they would be able to wound with a small movement. It would be the same if one wanted to wound with a thrust or *revés*, and also if one decided to give a strike to their opponent on the right side. It would not succeed if the step that was given was on the circumference to the left, and vice versa, such that of the type that has to be with such proportion that if you wanted to wound on the left side, the step has to be on the circumference to your right side, and if on the right, to the left, and with such disposition that when you want to wound, it is not with such a long movement that the opponent can know it, impede it, and give a strike.

Note which is the mean of proportion and which is the proportionate mean.

With such consideration, having chosen the mean of proportion in order to acknowledge the weapon, and then proportionate mean for the strike, it has to be with such disposition that when it has to be executed, it is not necessary to give another step, except when you will want to put in the left foot, or moving back, leaving wounding. You likewise have to understand, in wanting to wound with a *tajo* or *revés*, that it doesn't have to be so distant that when lifting the sword, making a violent movement, they can give you a thrust, nor so close that they impede it with some slap or *brazal*. Because of this it is very properly called a mean, because it lacks all the proportionate extremes, because with the movement that the *diestro* will make, it must not pass into the superfluous or lack what is necessary, as either will cause harm. As Carranza says, their own strikes give a signal and tacit warning of what each one needs, which you will know if in the working of whichever of them is with liberty and without danger. Since exercise will be able to manifest the good and bad of each one until coming to its perfection, which cannot be declared here, it will make it easy, and the demonstrations will attempt to declare what can be done, because not all is possible. You have to take note that in whichever demonstration, where it will show point A is the mean of proportion, and point B is the proportionate mean for the strike that has to be done. Taking a step, in all these you will find a certain measure in order to be able to wound without another movement of the feet, such that the mean of proportion perishes and ends, and the proportionate lasts until the strike has effect, and in each one of the demonstrations, will go declaring that which will have more ability.

It only remains to advise you that every time that you will exercise the arms, that you don't wait for your opponent to begin some technique, but take it into your own hands. The reason is that if you obligate them to a strike of second intention, choosing the proportionate mean for it, no movement will be made that you can't execute the strike from, because as you will come to that moment of advantage, when they make one, yours will be two, with sword as well as body. Without any doubt, even though it takes much time and many movements, you will bring the first advantageously in order to form the strike from there. For example, two people walk the same path, but one has a league of advantage over the other; if they started to walk at the same time, each one from where they are; when the one that was behind will have walked a league that the one in front had walked, they will have already walked another. Walking equally, even though the journey was very long, one will always have this advantage, and they would never reach each other. Thus if the *diestro* chose their mean, the opponent will make no other movement which they can't be wounded at the beginning of, due to said advantage, since as Carranza says, the techniques are formed from the opponent's movements. With this, we will begin the demonstrations.

The *diestro* takes note of what matters.