

Chapter 1 : Secrets Of German Medieval Swordmanship - Historical Reference - Currently Unavailable

"Secrets of German Medieval Swordmanship" is a fine quality book and best presentation of the quietly renown COMBAT-PROVEN Art of Master Johannes Leichtenauer -- as ordered and renewed by Master Sigmund Ringeck -- and as further ordered and renewed by Master Christian Henry Tobler of our time.

The drills described will also allow the student to gain better control of his weapon, increase speed and reduce telegraphing. It requires the student to be familiar and having practiced separately the techniques described herein. It is recommended that steel weapons are used for this drill as this is the only way for the techniques to work properly. Introduction As a student of German Longsword I find that the most difficult part of the Art is to make techniques that I have practiced work in sparring. Due to the excitement of the bout, the fact that your sparring partner is unwilling to let himself be killed and the speed of the action, technique in general deteriorates during sparring. Things that seemed easy during the technique drill suddenly become much less so. That is one of the reasons why we spar in the first place, to recreate as closely as possible the feel and chaos of a real fight. This is not a new concept and has been described in similar form elsewhere, especially in the works of Christian Tobler 1,2 , which are didactically extremely valuable and highly recommended for any student of the Art. In the grand scheme of things, reaction drills fall between technique drills and sparring. The drills described are used by the Calgary Chapter of the AES during regular practice and are presented here for the first time. How to carry out these drills The exercises described here are partner exercises, requiring at least two students, ideally of similar size and skill. However, it is very important to randomly change partners once you understand the drill, as that will further improve your understanding of what you are doing. Both participants must attack and defend in each drill. It is assumed that you understand and have practiced separately the techniques described in each exercise you are attempting. Whenever there is a branch in the drill, the party on the bottom of the branch gets to decide what to do. It is the task of the other party to react and implement the correct follow-up technique. This is the core of how reaction drills work. A word regarding binds as used in these exercises: If that follow-up fails usually "€" but not always "€" a thrust to the face then the bind is hard and whoever has the initiative must change his plan accordingly and implement the appropriate technique for a hard bind. Series of pictures demonstrating the drill in the flowchart depicted in Figure 2. The Attacker is marked with an A, the Defender with a D. The picture-sequence marked with Roman numerals, I-V is corresponding to the Roman numerals shown in Figure 2. Winkelman A and G. First you need to start the drills slowly and speed up as you feel more comfortable. Second, testing the bind should be as fast as possible. Ideally it should take much less than a second. Mark Winkelman, personal communications. Of course protective equipment fencing mask and gloves is a must. Blunt steel weapons are highly recommended when carrying out these exercises, as they give the best tactile feedback out of all the available sword analogs. If steel is not available aluminium is a reasonable substitute with wood wasters being a fallback option, however wood wasters are decidedly inferior. The reaction exercises described here generally do NOT assume same-handed partners. However, training with a cross-handed partner can be confusing, especially for right-handers who have to do so less often than lefthanders. When training with a cross-hander always be clear which side the attacker and the defender are moving to. Also, make sure, that these drills are performed in a controlled manner! Figure 1 shows how to read and implement Exercise 1, which is depicted in Figure 2. It is the defender who decides how far or close to bind. The attacker is always aiming for the defenders neck. The attacker then tests the bind by trying to thrust at the defenders face Figure 1, III. If he succeeds the bind was soft and the thrust to the face hits. The case shown has the defender binding the attackers blade firmly Figure 1, IV , the attacker then uses a Duplieren to hit the defender in the head Figure 1, V. In the flow charts colours are used as follows: The Attackers actions are on white background. The defenders actions are on grey background. A red box means that the acting party should kill the other with this technique. The reaction drills Exercise 1: This drill deals with the Zornhau and the resulting Zornbind. It was chosen as first technique, because the Zornhau, the resulting bind, the follow-up techniques and the counters are maybe the most effective and often used techniques in the entire Liechtenauer school. This first exercise

deals with the different ranges and follow-up techniques for each range. The Zornhau and Zornbind variations. The fields with roman numerals are shown in Figure 1. The attacker tries to: The defender tries to: This drill teaches to recognize the difference between a Zornhau and a Krummhau and a counter to the Krummhau. Differentiating between a Zornhau and a Krummhau and a counter against the Krummhau. Zornhau, Krummhau, Zornbind, first counter against the Krummhau, Thrusts. If the defender Krumps, the attacker tries to counter the Krummhau and kill the defender. If the defender strikes a Krummhau he tries to follow up with a killing blow, or go into grappling without getting hit by the counter to the Krump. This drills deals teaches the attacker to recognize a bad parry, which is a parry to the blade instead of the man. It is countered appropriately by using Durchwechseln. Bad parries are countered using Durchwechseln. Zornhau, Zornbind, Durchwechseln, first Winding, Thrusts. If the defender parries badly, follow up with a Durchwechseln.

Exercise 4 In this drill the Attacker practices the Zornhau and learns to recognize the Nachreisen counter, as well as dealing with it. The defender practises the Zornhau as well and also trains the Nachreisen. Striking a proper Zornhau, while learning to recognize the Nachreisen counter. Do a Zornhau with a hard bind or try to Nachreisen the Attacker. The Defender tries to telegraph his Actions as little as possible, to maximise the chance to succeed in the Nachreisen Manoeuvre. Attacker starts in any position from which a Zornhau can be struck. Striking a proper Zwerchhau, with proper follow-up, depending on whether the defender is hard or soft in the bind. Do a perfect Zwerchbind "neither too hard nor too soft" so the attacker is forced to test the bind properly. Attacker starts in any guard from which a Zwerchhau can be struck. Exercise 6 In this drill the attacker practices the Schielhau, while the defender tries to disrupt the attacker. Schielhau, Thrusts, Changing Through The attacker tries to: Strike a perfect Schielhau, no matter what. Disrupt the attacker, by trying to either thrust to the face, or change through and thrust to the face. Attacker starts in any guard from which a Schielhau can be struck. Exercise 7 This drill teaches the defender to recognize various Zornhau variants, as well as the appropriate counters to them. Learning to see the difference between various Zornhauen and a countering them. Zornhau, Schielhau, Scheitelhau, Zornort, Thrusts. Either strike a perfect Zornhau to the head, hip or leg. The attacker trains to telegraph as little as possible in this drill as to make it harder for the defender to come up with the correct response. Throw the correct counter at the attack and kill the assailant. Any position from which the attacker can strike a Zornhau. Exercise 8 This drill teaches the defender to differentiate between a Zornhau and an Unterhau and to counter both. Countering an Unterhau or a Zornhau with the appropriate winding. Zornhau, Unterhau, first and fifth Winding, Thrust The attacker tries to: Not telegraph his intention as he either strikes a perfect Zornhau or a perfect Unterhau. Recognize the attack in time and counter with the appropriate Winding. Attacker starts in vom Dach over the shoulder on his strong side. Exercise 9 This drill trains the defender to differentiate between a Zornhau and a Schielhau and tries to counter either. These defences are practiced in this Exercise. However, we do not know whether they are optimal and cannot be sure they would work in a real fight with sharp swords. Differentiating between a Zornhau and a Schielhau. Strike a perfect Schielhau or Zornhau without telegraphing. Counter the attack and not get killed in case of the Schielhau and kill the attacker in case of a Zornhau. Attacker starts in any high guard. Exercise 10 This drill practices defences against the Zornhau to the open and closed side. A strike against the closed side of the defender is extremely unlikely; however it allows the defender to practice the Wechselhau and the Abwenden. Also, sometimes a poorly done Nachreisen can turn into a situation that is very similar to a Zornhau to the closed side.

Chapter 2 : Historical European martial arts - Wikipedia

An excellent work on German medieval swordsmanship. My only regret is that there wasn't more time before publishing to adequately prepare and shoot the mounted section. Also, I'm more of a proponent of the Italian school.

Generally speaking, with the exception of modern day fencing - the older sword fighting methods of the West died out many hundreds of years ago, at least as a continual, unbroken line as seen in many Eastern Sword Arts. However, despite this, all has not been lost. Some skeletal information has been retained in old, once forgotten dust covered medieval sword fighting manuscripts and instructional tomes such as MS manuscript. However, as you will see - the scholars who have dedicated themselves to this work have done a fantastic job of reviving the old arts, to a very high standard. German Longsword Techniques An excellent demonstration of German Longsword Techniques Indeed, who can doubt that the techniques shown in the video are anything less than scientific and highly effective But in addition to being practical, they are also very beautiful - a kind of deadly poetry in motion and the equal of the more popular Eastern Martial Arts in both application and aesthetics. Stored safely for centuries in the tower of London and now in the Royal Armouries of Leeds, this 64 page vellum book dates back to between to A. However, the vast majority of work done in recreating Western Martial Arts pertains to the use of the Longsword in the German and Italian schools with the works of Johannes Liechtenauer and Fiore dei Liberti respectively. While the German school of Longsword was the most commonly recorded, with around 90 manuscripts to piece together, both schools have been painstakingly resurrected to the best of their knowledge by modern day HEMA scholars and is the focus of the majority of clubs and associations. Silver despised the rise of the rapier during his lifetime, and swore by the deadly effectiveness of the English Backsword. The English Backsword - favored over the rapier by George Silver While it was not the earliest manuscript in English, there is no doubt it is the most influential, and is dissected and brought back to life most prominently by the book English Swordsmanship by Stephen Hand. The True Swordsman Quite a few years ago one of our young members, Adam Sharp, put together a very ambitious and well designed basic introduction to learning basic German Longsword Techniques, including footwork, basic guard positions, basic strikes and even a sample workout. Equipment Needed At its most basic, the only real tool required and frequently used in European sword fighting and training is the Wooden Waster wooden training sword. The benefit of swords like these is that they can be used for practicing basic solo drills without fear of serious injury, and can be carefully used for two partner exercises though they are not recommended for sword fighting or sparring, as many are sturdy enough to break bones or cause concussion from a direct hit. Some practitioners get a great deal of mileage out of foam or padded swords LARP Boffers either purchased or hand made such as those made by Lancelot Chan at his Realistic Sparring Weapons website. The benefits of these foam swords as that it is possible to indulge in sword fighting quite fiercely with an absolute minimum of armor just a basic helmet and groin protection is usually enough and while they do hurt a little if they hit full force, it allows a very realistic approximation of a sword fight and make great modern sword training tools. You can read a comparative review of some LARP swords by Palnatoke and Epic Armoury here as well as an overview of LARP gear armor, costumes, etc here Otherwise, there are many blunted steel swords for more serious steel on steel practice. Articles on European Sword Training For an in depth article on the history of the medieval sword fighting tradition, including resources on where to find out more information as well as how to find a school near you click here! Further Resources The seminal book for any student of the Longsword and the book that has been the foundation of many a sword school and inspiration for later works, is Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship by Christian Tobler. While it is quite academic in tone and far from an easy read, it set the standard for research into HEMA and is a must have for any enthusiast of Western Martial Arts. Other excellent resources recommended by SBG members include the following titles: And finally, saving the best for last, Wiktenauer by the HEMA alliance is a free wiki style resource with hi resolution scans of the the original Fechtbuch texts and has become the number one source for students and scholars looking to study the art direct from the original materials that were, until only a few years ago, only available by visiting the libraries containing the original texts. Ah, the wonders of the interwebz..

Chapter 3 : Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship by Christian Henry Tobler

Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship is an interpretation of the teachings of Master Johannes Liechtenauer and of the later work in the 15th Century of Sigmund Ringeck, a descendant of the Liechtenauer school and master-at-arms to Albrecht, Count Palatine of the Rhine and Duke of Bavaria.

Academic fencing painting Transition to modern sports fencing: In the course of the 19th century , Western martial arts became divided into modern sports on one hand and applications that retain military significance on the other. In the latter category are the methods of close-quarter combat with the bayonet besides use of the sabre and the lance by cavalrists and of the cutlass by naval forces. Apart from fencing with bladed weapons, European combat sports of the 19th century include boxing , savate in France , numerous regional forms of folk wrestling , and numerous styles of stick fighting. Wrestling, javelin , fencing, archery , and boxing continue some of the martial arts of Europe in modified sport form. Fencing in the 19th century transformed into a pure sport. While duels remained common among members of the aristocratic and officer classes, they became increasingly frowned upon in society during the course of the century, and such duels as were fought to the death were increasingly fought with pistols, not bladed weapons. Some existing forms of European stick fighting can be traced to direct teacher-student lineages from the 19th century. A third category might be traditional "folk styles", mostly folk wrestling. Greco-Roman wrestling was a discipline at the first modern Olympic Games in Inclusion of Freestyle wrestling followed in Egerton Castle , Alfred Hutton and Mouatt Biggs giving a demonstration of "Old English sword-and-buckler play" before the Prince of Wales at the Lyceum Theatre in The Graphic Attempts at reconstructing the discontinued traditions of European systems of combat began in the late 19th century, with a revival of interest in the Middle Ages. The movement was led in England by the soldier, writer, antiquarian and swordsman, Alfred Hutton. Hutton learned fencing at the school [5] founded by Domenico Angelo. In , he organized in his regiment stationed in India the Cameron Fencing Club, for which he prepared his first work, a page booklet entitled Swordsmanship. In , Hutton published his most influential work Cold Steel: A Practical Treatise on the Sabre, which presented the historical method of military sabre use on foot, combining the 18th century English backsword with modern Italian duelling sabre. He delivered numerous practical demonstrations with his colleague Egerton Castle of these systems during the s, both in order to benefit various military charities and to encourage patronage of the contemporary methods of competitive fencing. Interest in the physical application of historical fencing techniques remained largely dormant during the first half of the 20th century due to a number of factors. Similar work, although more academic than practical in nature, occurred in other European countries. Throughout the 20th century a small number of researchers, principally academics with access to some of the sources, continued exploring the field of historical European martial arts from a largely academic perspective. In , Martin Wierschin published a bibliography of German fencing manuals, along with a transcription of Codex Ringeck and a glossary of terms. During the midth century, a small number of professional fight directors for theatre, film and television - notably including Arthur Wise and William Hobbs, both of the U. In the s and s, Patri J. Pugliese began making photocopies of historical treatises available to interested parties, greatly spurring on research. During the late s, translations and interpretations of historical sources began appearing in print as well as online. These groups are engaged in attempting to reconstruct Historical European Martial Arts using various training methods. Although the focus generally is on the martial arts of Medieval and Renaissance masters, nineteenth and early twentieth century martial arts teachers are also studied and their systems are reconstructed, including Edward William Barton-Wright , the founder of Bartitsu ; [8] combat savate and stick fighting master Pierre Vigny ; London-based boxer and fencer Rowland George Allanson-Winn ; French journalist and self-defence enthusiast Jean Joseph-Renaud ; and British quarterstaff expert Thomas McCarthy. The martial traditions of the Netherlands are researched by Reinier van Noort, [9] who additionally focuses on German and French martial sources of the 17th century. Leading researchers on Manuscript I. Cvet self-published in and Christian Tobler. Since the mid s the rate of publication of HEMA related texts has greatly increased. A list of current publications is included below. Due to the excessive

number of participants, in this competitive event was split in two separate events: Civilian weapons include single sword, sword and cape, sword and dagger, and sword and Brocchiero Buckler. The military weapons are the two-handed sword, spear, shield and spear, sword and targe, and sword and rotella. The civil weapons championship is one of the largest HEMA tournaments in the world. The annual Australian Historical Swordplay Convention, primarily a teaching event was hosted and attended by diverse Australian groups from to It was held in Brisbane in and , Sydney in and , Canberra in and , the Gold Coast in and Melbourne in . Since , Swordplay, a tournament event has been run each year in Brisbane. FightCamp has been running since and it is organized by London-based Schola Gladiatoria. The event also includes a full day workshop that features international and local instructors. The tournament includes longsword , singlestick , glima , and one rotating weapon which is changed every year. The location of the event changes every year, and has been located at Fort Casey and Pacific Lutheran University. Since , a biannual event called the Vancouver International Swordplay Symposium, has been held in Vancouver, Canada. Hosted by Academie Duello, this event has brought instructors, authors and researchers from around the world for workshops, lectures and seminars. School of Historical Swordplay. This Event has attracted many practitioners from around the world. This event, held throughout the late 19th century in England, the United States and Australia was last won by Parker in Sydney in . Parker was never challenged. The event was won by Paul Wagner of Sydney, also the current holder of the Glorianna Cup, the broadsword championship of Britain. Lewis Hand of Hobart, Australia won the junior title. In the tradition of the 19th century title, the championship is held in the home town of the current Champion. As such the next championship will be held in Sydney in early . Jousting tournaments have become more common, with Jousters travelling Internationally to compete. In , several dozen HEMA schools and clubs from around the world united under the umbrella of the HEMA Alliance , a US-based martial arts federation dedicated to developing and sharing the Historical European Martial Arts and assisting HEMA schools and instructors with such things as instructor certification, insurance, and equipment development.

Chapter 4 : German school of fencing - Wikipedia

Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship is a martial arts manual written by Christian Tobler in The source material is Sigmund Ringeck's own combat manual from the 15th century, which itself draws on the merkverse note of Grand Master Johannes Liechtenauer.

An article by Bill Grandy Despite the grandeur surrounding the idea of the sword, such weapons are often thought to be heavy and unwieldy. It is often believed that the medieval warrior was crude, relying on brute strength more than skill to survive. If one stops to think about it, though, this would betray common sense: Such myths can be dispelled when one takes a look at period fencing treatises and manuscripts, which provide an insight into the incredibly sophisticated and effective martial arts that were used in deadly combat. There were many masters from different countries, from Italy to England, who taught various styles. Fencing master, likely Johannes Liechtenauer *Kunst des Fechtens*: We do know that he taught a martial art that he kept secret from all but his own students. In order to preserve his teachings, Liechtenauer composed a series of verses which in reality were a secret code for his students. Today we know of this martial art, often referred to as *Kunst des Fechtens*, or "The Art of Fighting," through their writings. These manuals detail many forms of fighting such as fighting with the longsword both in and out of armour , the messer a single-edged sword similar in form to a falchion , sword and buckler, or the dagger, as well as unarmed combat and fighting from horseback. We know that *Kunst des Fechtens* was practiced in the 14th and 15th centuries, and the 16th century German masters Jacob Sutor and Joachim Meyer produced manuals that show longsword fencing from the same lineage. Therefore we know that this style existed in at least three centuries. The manuals primarily focus on the judicial duel and personal combat, though they are complete systems, and it would seem logical that such techniques would also have been used in warfare. Parts of the Sword The longsword can take several forms, and each user may have different tastes in length and balance. A few things are clear from the period treatises, though: The sword is divided into two main parts: The blade itself is divided into two halves: The strong of the blade is not physically stronger, but is named so because of the stronger leverage you have against another sword here, whereas the weak can be pushed aside easily. Despite this, the weak moves much faster than the strong, and your attacks should ideally be made with this faster-moving portion. When you grip the sword, the edge closest to your second knuckles is the long edge. The edge closest to your forearm is the short edge other martial art forms use the term true and false edge, respectively. While many would expect to mainly use the long edge, in *Kunst des Fechtens* it is quite common to use both edges in attacks. Basic Footwork The existing German fencing texts do not go into great detail about proper footwork, so in some cases a reasonable amount of extrapolation is necessary, sometimes drawing from similar martial art forms of the same time period. For the sake of this article, we will only get into the basics. Different stances will be used for different reasons, but you should start with your feet roughly shoulder-width apart. Take a step forward with one foot, which will point forward, and pivot the back foot so that it points out forty-five degrees or so for now it does not matter which foot is forward, as this will change depending on circumstances. This will give you balance both forward and backwards as well as side-to-side. Bend the knees slightly, as this will allow you to move much more easily and fluidly an important aspect often ignored by beginners. For now, keep your weight centered. Stand upright with your body relaxed. Relaxation is very important. Oftentimes beginners tense their shoulders when holding the sword, which results in choppy motions and slowed reactions. Passing step The first type of movement will be a simple step forward or backward. Keeping the feet in the same orientation, step forward with the front foot, pushing with the ball of the back foot, and letting the back foot follow so that you finish in the same position you started. Then do the opposite, starting with the rear foot moving back, pushing with the ball of the front foot, which follows after. Do this smoothly, without bobbing the head up and down. This is the simplest type of footwork, and should not take long to master. Once you have practiced this, try moving left and right, as well as diagonally forward and backwards. Afterwards, switch whichever foot is the leading one and practice this again. The next type of footwork is called the passing step, and is also simple. Start in the basic position described above, then pass

the rear foot forward in front of the other. Finish in the basic stance, but with a new foot leading. This is a pass forward. To pass back, simply bring back the front foot. The passing step can be modified to step diagonally as well, and in fact this is usually how it will be performed to avoid being struck. For example, if you begin in a left foot forward guard, and your opponent cuts to your head, you can pass forward to the right to dodge the sword. In case of large steps, let the left foot trail behind and come back into your guard. Be sure to practice passing with both feet. Again, be sure to practice movement smoothly and fluidly, and finish your steps in a solid, balanced position.

The Four Guards When gripping the hilt, place the dominant hand near the guard. The off-hand can hold the grip either near the pommel or can grip the pommel itself. It is obvious from the fencing manuals themselves that masters had different opinions on which grip was best. And you will also strike harder and truer, with the pommel swinging itself and turning in the strike you will strike harder than if you were holding the pommel. When you pull the pommel in the strike you will not come as perfect or as strongly. However, fighters in some fechtbuch illustrations are clearly seen gripping the pommel. Experiment with both grips and do whichever makes you feel more comfortable. The thumb of the dominant hand is often placed on the flat of the blade to provide control for many techniques. This may feel slightly odd at first, but you will get used to it, and certain cuts require it. When the thumb is on the blade, sometimes it must be flat against the sword. At other times it will naturally roll so that the side is pressed against the flat. There are other times where having the thumb against the blade is not necessary at all. For now, simply do what is most comfortable.

Now that we have gripped the sword, there are four primary positions, or guards, in which to stand: A guard is essentially a defensive position that also allows you to launch your attacks. Always remain in a guarded position.

Plow guard Pflug The Plow guard gets its name from the similarity of its blade orientation to a plow. The sword will always be on the side of the back foot, so in a right foot forward stance your hilt should be on the left side. Should you switch sides, merely pass forward or back, otherwise you will be twisted up. The Plow guard will defend the torso against attacks and allow you to make quick thrusts from below. When standing in the Plow on the right side, assuming you are right-handed, the long edge faces down, and on the left side it faces up. Reverse this for left-handers. The thumb will be on the side of the blade that is facing you.

Ox guard Ochs The Ox guard gets its name from the sloping horns of an ox. To take this guard, start in the plow guard and curl your arms up. The sword hilt will be held to the side and slightly above your head, on the side of your back foot. If you switch sides, pass forward or backwards so that the sword is always on the side of the back foot. When standing in the Ox, the edges will be parallel to the ground and, assuming you are right-handed, the long edge will face the right. Your thumb will be on bottom side of the blade. The Ox guard will defend against attacks coming from above and allow you to make quick thrusts from above. To stand in the Roof guard, hold the sword tip up, pointing just slightly back. Your hands and hilt should be above your head. Alternatively, the hilt can be held at the side of your head, but otherwise in the same position. Either way is correct, though if you choose the first, the sword should be in the center, and if you choose the second, the sword should be held on the side of your head that is also on the side of the back foot. The long edge faces your opponent. Unlike the Ox or Plow, the Roof guard does not protect by intercepting an oncoming blade. Rather, the Roof guard protects by offense. Should an opponent blindly charge in, the Roof guard allows you to make a quick and powerful downward stroke. Your opponent most likely will see this and therefore will have to plan around this. Point the tip of your sword forward and down towards the ground. This guard gives the appearance that you are open to attack, hence it "fools" your opponent into attacking. When standing in this guard the long edge faces the ground.

When to use each must be thoroughly understood.

The Strike To strike is to make a hard cut with percussive momentum, unlike a slice detailed below. This can also be referred to as a cut. Striking with the sword is not just a simple action of swinging the arms. A cut must be controlled and precise, because anytime you attack there is a moment of opportunity for your opponent to strike you. Therefore you must never attack wildly and must always recover into a guarded position. There are a few important things to keep in mind when cutting. The first is to make sure you are striking with the edge.

Chapter 5 : The University of Exeter Press - Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship

Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship is a photo-intensive interpretation of a medieval fencing manuscript featuring longsword, wrestling, and spear combat Books Asian Martial Arts.

History[edit] Late medieval tradition[edit] The first document of German heritage which shows fencing techniques is the Royal Armouries Ms. The next documents date from approximately a century later, when records of the tradition attributed to the 14th-century master Johannes Liechtenauer begin to appear. The history of the German school of fencing in the tradition of Liechtenauer spans roughly years, or generations of masters depending on the dating of Liechtenauer from to The earliest source, Ms. Martin Hundsfield and Ott Jud were probably active in the early 15th century, but there is a scarcity of historical sources until the midth century. Mark , which enjoyed a quasi-monopoly on teaching martial arts from until In , Emperor Maximilian L. The Emperor also granted students the right to bear arms and allowed them to have duels. In the 16th century, the tradition became more a sporting exercise than a system of combat for duelling or the battlefield. Comparisons with descriptions in other manuscripts from the period such as the Cologne Fechtbuch confirm that this period was a transitional stage between the late medieval school of Johannes Liechtenauer and the German Renaissance "sportive" Federfechten as practiced in the late 16th century as recorded in the later printed manuals by Joachim Meyer and others. A later manuscript, dated and attributed to Lienhart Sollinger, cites Pauernfeindt and is largely identical in content. The foundation of the Federfechter in at Vienna falls into this late period. The final phase of the tradition stretches from the late 16th to the early 17th century, with masters such as Joachim Meyer and Jakob Sutor. Decline of the German tradition[edit] In the 17th century, rapier fencing of the Italian school became fashionable due to treatises by such as Salvator Fabris , and the German tradition becoming regarded as old-fashioned and unrefined among the nobility during the Baroque. Longsword fencing was gradually discontinued at noble fencing schools, including most universities, at the time. The rapier had an advantage in that it could be worn well with the clothing of that time period when longswords were typically seen as too large to be worn fashionably. You may even be able to kill him, before he can take his gun out of its halter, before he can make the first shot". A long sword may cause problems and excite enemies". Mark and the Federfechter as well as the existence of "Klopffechter" artistic and stage fencers who used blunt weapons. The last of public displays of longsword fencing was on 5 November , the author clearly mentions the use of "Schlachtenschwerter" "battle swords". The most prominent guest of this display was Friedrich II. The collapse of the Holy Roman Empire, in , and the wars and battles of the period destroyed several of the remaining old fencing schools and led to the death of many active fencers. It is possible that the Napoleonic wars brought an end to most of the remaining lines of the Liechtenauer tradition. The author Jos Baader, mentions living veterans of the old fencing schools who were still alive but very old he mentions a gentleman who is in his late 80s, but was once a practitioner of their specific longsword fencing style. Hutton could have met some living longsword fencers and interviewed them. Unfortunately, classical German stage fencing became more and more rare and its practitioners started to die out. There are several places called "Lichtenau" in Germany, and Ms. What is now known as the "German school" comprises those traditions which were put on paper in the late medieval period, and this tradition of compiling written manuals or epitomes of fighting systems appears to mostly have been confined to Southern Germany. From about the same time, early records of the Italian school of fencing document the German school, beginning with the writings of Fiore dei Liberi , who mentions a master of Swabia called Johannes "who was a student of Nicholai of Toblem. Paulus Hector Mair describes a Spanish style of rapier fencing in his book on fencing. In the 16th century, there was an established tradition of Federfechten competitions. The dominant guild were the Brotherhood of St. Mark which held their annual meeting in Frankfurt. After , there was a second influential guild, the Federfechter , which apparently originated in the southeastern part of the empire Prague , Vienna. Masters or treatises of the period that can be located geographically include: Cgm , written in what is now Switzerland, most likely the Toggenburg , shortly before Joachim Meyer was active in the s in Strasbourg. Karl Ludwig Blum mentioned that there were traveling masters, who gave lectures to noblemen in the Grand

Duchy of Moscow. Even in , many fencing masters based their fighting styles on the tradition. An example is would-be master Joachim Meyer, who based his early rapier fencing on Lichtenauers principles, which was considered to be the most effective and efficient school of fencing. Frederic Hervey said that "the Imperial German fencers came to Britain to teach their Anglo-Saxon brethren the old and knightly art of fencing". However, it can be assumed that few fencers in Britain received such training. One German source states: When they were finished with the swordplay, he Louis XIV clapped loudly and asked for more stage fights and friendly bouts " Note: Anne of Austria, the mother of Louis, was a Spanish princess from the Holy Roman Empire, given that the Liechtenauer tradition was both the most widely practiced and officially recognised form of fencing in the Holy Roman Empire, it is very likely that these fencers were practitioners of the Liechtenauer tradition. He used this weapon to exemplify several overarching martial principles that also apply to other disciplines within the tradition. Also part of the curriculum was fighting with the dagger Degen mainly the roundel dagger and with pole weapons. Two other disciplines besides Blossfechten involved the sword: The anonymous author explicitly states that Liechtenauer had cast his teaching in opaque verses intended to hide their meaning from the uninitiated. He stressed that there is "only a single art of the sword" which had been the same for centuries and which is the kernel and foundation of all arts of combat. Practice knighthood and learn the art that dignifies you, and brings you honour in wars. At the center of the art is an emphasis on swiftness, as well as on balance and good judgement: Indes means "meanwhile" or "interim", referring to the time it takes for the opponent to complete an action. He then either attacks on the vor or remains in the bind until his opponent acts, depending on what he feels is right. When his opponent starts to act, the fencer acts indes meanwhile and regains the vor before the opponent can finish his action. Range[edit] Some of the later practitioners of the German school of fencing, such as Theodori Verolini, [75] started to use the term Mensur in the 17th century to explain the different ranges of the art of fencing. Weite Mensur wide mensur the attacker has to make two footsteps to reach his opponent with his weapon. Mittlere Mensur middle mensur the attacker has to make one footstep to reach the other combatant with the blade. Nahe Mensur near mensur the attacker can cut or thrust his enemy without having to make any footsteps. Enge Mensur close mensur the attacker and his opponent are so close that they are able to reach the other person with their hands. Most of the wrestling-techniques Ringen am Schwert can only be used in the close mensur. Basic attacks[edit] Liechtenauer and other German masters describe three basic methods of attack with the sword. They are sometimes called drei wunder, "three wonders", with a deliberate pun on "three wonders. A hewing stroke with one of the edges of the sword. A stroke delivered from above the attacker. A stroke delivered from side to side. A stroke delivered from below the attacker. A thrusting attack made with the point of the sword. Slicing attacks made with the edge of the sword by placing the edge against the body of the opponent and then pushing or pulling the blade along it. All five are attacks from the first phase of the fight zufechten and are long range, accompanied by triangular stepping. The motion of the blade resembles a windshield wiper. Krumphau is almost always accompanied with a wide diagonal sideways step. The Krumphau breaks the guard Ochs. The Zwerchau breaks the guard vom Tag. The Schielhau breaks both the Pflug and Langen Ort guards and can be used to counter-hew against a powerful Oberhau. The blade can be held vertically or at roughly degrees. Some historical manuals state that when this guard is held on the right side of the body that the short edge should be facing up and when held on the left side of the body the short edge should be facing down with the thumb on the flat of the blade. Liechtenauer is emphatic that the above four guards are sufficient, and all guards taught by other masters may be derived from them. Later masters introduce richer terminology for variant guards: Kron is used at the bind and is usually a prelude to grappling. Many of the cuts pass through this transitional guard, and it is the natural ending of a thrust. This technique is based upon the concept of using weakness against strength. There are eight variations. Armoured combat Harnischfechten [edit] Halbschwert against Mordstreich in the Codex Wallerstein Plate Combat in full plate armour made use of the same weapons as Blossfechten, the longsword and dagger possibly of special make optimized for piercing the openings in armour ; but the techniques were entirely different. Attacking an opponent in plate armour is carried out in two ways: Penetration was extremely unlikely even with thrusting attacks. Percussion was realized with the Mordstreich "murder strike" , an attack with the hilt when holding

the sword at the blade, and then penetration into openings of the armour with the Halbschwert short sword , which allowed stabbing with greater precision. Lying on the ground, he could then be easily killed with a stab into his visor or another opening of the armour.

Chapter 6 : Half-sword - Wikipedia

Medieval Fighting with the German Masters Christian Henry Tobler presents a beautifully interpreted study of fighting techniques recorded in the mnemonic verse of the legendary German swordmaster, Johannes Liechtenauer.

Chapter 7 : An Introduction to HEMA

Christian Tobler's Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship is the first book to describe the fighting system of a single master, Sigmund Ringeck in a way that is comprehensible to the beginner and still enormously useful to the veteran swordsman.

Chapter 8 : Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship : Christian Henry Tobler :

In his first book, and the first of its kind, Christian Henry Tobler presents a beautifully interpreted study of fighting techniques recorded in the mnemonic verse of the legendary German swordmaster, Johannes Liechtenauer.

Chapter 9 : Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship (Literature) - TV Tropes

Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship. I have wanted this book for sometime now. I am in the process of reading and have found what I have read very interesting and informative on the subject in question.