

Revision History

Summary of changes from Previous Version

Page	Paragraph Number	Summary of Change	Date Approved
3	A.3.d	Removal restriction against thrusting.	1/15/2019
3-4	C.1	Armor rules – two levels will be specified. If using metal blades, armor is based on the Rapier Cut and Thrust requirements. If using Rawlings (plastic), armor is based on the Caid Unarmored rules.	1/15/2019
3	C.1.a	Face protection. Increased hole size due to much larger cross section of blades in this program as compared to epees which it rapier rules were originally intended.	1/15/2019
4	1.b	Moved definition of Rigid Material to glossary.	1/15/2019
5	2.a	Added verbage to make perforation size for horse eye protection consistent with human eye protection.	1/15/2019
5	3.a	Included the description of blade requirements from the current Rapier rules, rather than referencing them. Also included details on thrusting tip requirements.	1/15/2019
6	Glossary	Added Glossary of terms (rigid material, puncture resistant, flex)	1/15/2019
6	D.2	Clarified reporting and who can participate.	1/15/2019
7	E.7	Removal restriction against thrusting.	1/15/2019
7	F.1	Add thrusting to the program Dec 2018.	1/15/2019
6	D.1	Restructured program marshals into Testing Marshals and Participation Marshals, with clarification on their duties and who can approve them.	1/24/2019

ROSSFECHTEN PROGRAM (for MOUNTED COMBAT WITH SPECIAL SIMULATORS)

--Proposal submitted by Lord David Straker Whittaker, Caid

--Program developed in consultation with Mistress Arabella da Siena (former Society Equestrian Officer), Master Laertes McBride (Society Rapier Marshal), Duke Guillaume de Belgique (Deputy Earl Marshal for Unarmored Combat, Kingdom of Caid) and Sir Alexis la Bouche (Program Administrator for experimental wooden lance jousting)

A. OVERVIEW:

1. Current SCA mounted combat rules permit the use of simulators constructed with foam rubber over a rattan or PEX core. These simulators allow for a fairly accurate simulation of medieval tourney batons (i.e. wooden clubs), but for a number of reasons-- shape, balance, lack of edges, and the give of foam rubber-- they do a poor job of simulating mounted sword use. Different simulators are needed if we wish to have a moderate amount of verisimilitude when re-enacting mounted sword tournaments or in exploring mounted combat techniques contained in period manuals such as the *Fiore de Liberi* and *Ringeck* manuscripts. The Rossfechten program allows these different weapon simulators.
2. Proposed Weapon Simulators: There are two types of weapon simulators with an established record of safety, notably in programs that require minimal armor. We already have extensive amounts of data and reports on these simulators. Importantly for the purpose of this program, they also provide a reasonably accurate simulation of the various swords used on horseback in period.
 - a. The Rawlings style plastic simulators approved for use in the Caid Unarmored Combat program
 - b. Metal cut and thrust blades approved for use in the SCA Rapier Cut and Thrust program
3. Potential Concerns:
 - a. Experience with mounted combat has demonstrated that the vast majority of strikes are conducted at relatively matched speeds as the riders maneuver to gain advantage on each other, usually at a walk or trot and rarely faster than a collected canter. That said, blows thrown during a head-to-head pass have the potential for being somewhat stronger than a blow thrown by a combatant on foot, due to the higher relative velocities and mass of the horses. Experience with the jousting program has demonstrated that experienced and controlled riders can exchange blows safely in a head-to-head pass, but the point remains that this scenario needs to be approached with caution. Initial participants in this program should avoid strikes at higher speeds until such a time as all riders and horses are completely comfortable with strikes thrown at a walk or standing.
 - b. As noted above, the proposed simulators have been proven to be safe when used in conjunction with relatively minimal armor. Current mounted combat armor requirements meet or exceed those of the Unarmored Combat and Cut and Thrust programs for the most part. The one significant point of difference is with head/eye protection, due to the narrower profile of the Rawlings and cut and thrust blades. Helmets for use in this program will have to meet the requirements recommended below.
 - c. While certainly safe, the proposed simulators lack the padding of current mounted combat

weapons. While not an issue for an armored human, full armor for horses is less practical. That said, the proposed simulators have been tested with participants wearing nothing more than abrasion resistant clothing in non-vulnerable areas. As with the riders, the suggested horse armor is designed to protect the vulnerable areas of the horse, notably eye and head protection. Furthermore, wooden, metal and even sharp weapons are routinely and safely used in mounted games already, and have always carried the risk of horse strikes. It is presumed that all participants in this program will spend the necessary time with their horses desensitizing them to possibility of incidental contact with weapons, as they should with all horses engaged in mounted games of any sort. Riders may want to consider additional armor for their horses beyond just the mandatory minimums (see below).

B. ADMINISTRATION

1. The Experimental Rossfechten Combat program will be centrally administered by the Test Program Administrator but de-centrally managed by the KEOs.
 - a. Kingdoms may choose to participate, but the KEO must notify the SEO and the Program Administrator of the kingdom's intention to participate.
 - b. KEOs must report to the Program Administrator at the end of the first month (of the kingdom's participation in the program) and every 3 months following (during Phase One).
2. The list of authorized participants in the program shall be maintained by the Program Administrator, who shall inform the SEO of additions and removals. The SEO shall maintain a list of authorized participants and marshals on the SEO's webpage under the Experimental Rossfechten program.

C. EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

1. Armor requirements depend on the blade simulator being used.
 - a. For Metal Blades:
 - i. Helmets for riders must be constructed of rigid material. In addition, the eye aperture must be covered with perforated metal. Such metal must not have holes larger than ¼" (6mm) and shall also meet the definition of rigid material. Alternatively, A 12 kilogram mesh (i.e. standard fencing mask mesh) is sufficient for face protection, so long as the remainder of the head is covered with rigid material
 1. Additional helmets not meeting the above standard but providing the necessary eye, head, and neck protection via other design elements may be approved on a case by case basis with the joint concurrence of the KEO and Test Program Administrator.
 - ii. Neck protection: The neck, including the larynx, cervical vertebrae, and first thoracic vertebra must be covered by one or a combination of the following and must stay covered during typical combat situations, including turning the head, lifting the chin, etc.
 1. The helm
 2. A gorget of rigid material or heavy leather, lined with ¼-inch (6mm) of closed cell foam or equivalent padding.

3. A camail or aventail of mail or heavy leather, lined with ¼-inch (6mm) of closed cell foam or equivalent padding
 - iii. Hand and Elbow Protection: The back of the fingers, thumb and the back of the hand require reinforced padding or rigid material. Examples include but are not limited to demi-gauntlets (paired with a guard that covers the hand), Revival sparring gloves, or a standard metal gauntlet. The weapon or parrying device may provide some of the protection. Rigid protection is required to cover all three points of the elbows
 - iv. Body Protection: the entire torso (the chest, back, abdomen, groin, and sides up to and including the armpits) must be covered with puncture-resistant material. Acceptable minimum armpit coverage is provided by a triangle extending from the armpit seam, covering the lower half of the sleeve at the seam, and extending down the inner/under arm, one-third the distance to the fighter's elbow.
- b. For Rawlings swords
- i. Helmets for riders must be constructed of rigid material. In addition, the eye aperture must be covered with perforated metal. Such metal must not have holes larger than ¼" (6mm) and shall also meet the definition of rigid material. Alternatively, A 12 kilogram mesh (i.e. standard fencing mask mesh) is sufficient for face protection. The rest of the head must be covered by a minimum of heavy weight denim or equivalent cloth. Hardened leather, quilted cloth, closed cell foam, or additional protection on the back of the head is highly recommended.
 - ii. Neck protection: Same as for metal blades.
 - iii. Hand and Elbow Protection: Elbow pads are required; rigid elbow protection is recommended. Pads that have ¾ wrap around to partly protect the inner-elbow are suggested. Elbow padding may be included as part of a gambeson or other arm protection (i.e., "bazuband" style vambraces, elbow cops, etc.). Hands must be protected by a minimum of leather gloves with full fingers. Padded or reinforced gloves are highly recommended, particularly for longsword.
 - iv. Body Protection: The torso, arms, and legs must be covered by cloth fabric at a minimum.
2. Armor Requirements – Horses
- a. In addition to meeting the mounted combat standards, equine eye protection for Rossfechten must meet the standards for eye openings outlined under section C1a. Mesh or pierced metal cups with the required hole size and spacing meet these requirements. ***Note that these requirements are very much subject to change, and it is anticipated that part of the experimental program will involve stress testing horse eye protection.***
 - b. The use of a chamfron or face protector and poll protection is highly recommended and may be a requirement in the final version of these rules, pending experimentation. Furthermore, a full caparison can help avoid abrasion from metal weapons. As always, it is expected that riders take full responsibility for the health and well-being of both themselves and their mounts.

3. Weapon Guidelines

a. Metal blades:

- i. may be no longer than 48" from tip to top of tang (i.e. where the tang and the forte meet)
- ii. Blades must be reasonably flexible (see glossary)
- iii. All blade ends must be capped with rubber, plastic or leather. Alternatively, the tip may be rolled or otherwise blunted so as to meet the requirements of section C3a4 below.
- iv. Tips will have a blunt striking surface, presenting a cross-section of at least 3/8" (9mm).
- v. Tips must be firmly taped or glued in place. Alternatively, the tip may be an integral part of the construction of the blade (e.g, a rolled metal tip)

- b. Rawlings Synthetic blades: All Rawlings synthetic blades that reproduce period swords are acceptable. This currently includes their longsword, "short sword" (i.e, arming sword) and basket hilt sword. Note that Rawlings blades are constructed with blunt tips, so no additional thrusting tip needs to be affixed.

Glossary.

1. Rigid material:

- (a) Steel of no less than 18 gauge, or aluminum of no less than 1/8-inch (3mm).
- (b) Other metals of sufficient thickness to give similar rigidity to those listed above to include treated steel or aluminum.
- (c) High impact resistant plastics such as ABS or polyethylene of sufficient thickness to give similar rigidity to those listed above.
- (d) One layer of hardened heavy leather (8 ounce, 3.18 mm)
- (e) Two layers of untreated heavy leather.
- (f) Chainmail over a padded gambeson has been deemed equivalent.
- (g) Equivalent materials may also be used, at the discretion of the KEO and Test Program Administrator.

2. Puncture Resistant: any material or combination of material that will predictably withstand puncture. Examples include, but are not limited to, 4 oz (1.6mm) leather, four layers of heavy poplin cloth, ballistic nylon rated to at least 550 Newtons, commercial fencing cloth rated to at least 550 Newtons. Rigid material is also considered to be puncture resistant.

3. Reasonably Flexible. To determine if a weapon meets the standard of being "reasonably flexible": Hold the weapon parallel to the ground, supporting the handle against a table or bench if necessary. Hang a 6-ounce weight (170 grams) one inch (25mm) or less from the end of the tip. If the blade flexes at least 1/2" (12mm), then it is deemed "reasonably flexible".

4. Non-brittle: Shall refer to material that will not break or shatter upon being subjected to a stiff strike.

D. PARTICIPTION AND MARSHALS

1. The Rossfechten Experimental program is administered at the Society level and not by the kingdoms. As such, the SEO has a specific deputy in charge of the experimental program, the Society Deputy for Rossfechten.
 - a. Society Deputy for Rossfechten: Approves Participants and Testing marshals.
 - b. Testing Marshals for Rossfechten: Is approved by the SEO and Test Administrator. Oversees Rossfechten activities: inspect armour and weapons, marshal at events and practices of Rossfechten mounted combat, recommends people for approval into the program, teach classes that include non-approved participants.
 - c. Participation Marshals for Rossfechten: Includes warranted EQ marshals approved to marshal mounted combat in their kingdom, and approved by their KEO. May marshal Rossfechten activities that include approved program participants only: inspect armour and weapons, marshal at events and practices of Rossfechten mounted combat. They may not teach or include non-approved participants.
2. All participants must be approved by the Test Program Administrator and KEO. The participant must be mounted games authorized.
3. A list of authorized participants in the program shall be maintained by the Test Program Administrator, who shall inform the SEO of additions and removals.
4. Kingdoms have the discretion to allow the activity in their kingdom. Experimental sessions are not allowed at events or practices in kingdoms that are not specifically participating in the experimental program. KEOs shall notify the SEO and Test Program Administrator if their kingdom chooses to participate in the program, and shall inform the Test Program Administrator and SEO of those authorized to participate within their kingdom.

E. COMBAT CONVENTIONS

The following are the initial set of combat conventions. They may be changed after the introductory period with consultation from the Society Equestrian Officer.

1. Individual kingdoms may impose additional restrictions and guidelines. For example, kingdoms may choose to restrict allowable simulators, or increase (but not decrease) armor standards. Any such additional restrictions shall be submitted to the Test Program Administrator and SEO.
2. Unless otherwise stated, all current guidelines for mounted combat apply.
3. Any blow that if missed would contact the horse must be discontinued. For example, if a rider's arm is next to the neck of the horse, striking at that arm is prohibited. Riders should not use this rule to their advantage by using their horse as a shield.
4. If a strike carries through to the horse, a hold will be called. Riders should debrief the occurrence before recommencing the session.
5. As a general guideline, engagements will be conducted until the first good blow or an agreed upon number of counted blows, at which point combatants are expected to cease combat until the next engagement is commenced. Blows will be called by the struck combatant.
6. Blow calibration has not yet been established, but current mounted combat calibration levels will be used as a starting level. Incidental conduct will not count as a blow. At the other

extreme, a fully focused blow such as seen in armored foot combat would be excessive for the current armor requirements and are not allowed. In general, an unobstructed blow thrown at speed with “intent” would meet the envisioned calibration for this program. Participants should keep in mind that occasional minor injuries such as bruises and abrasions are almost inevitable, particularly if only minimal armor is worn.

7. Rossfechten combat can only be conducted **using matched simulators**. In other words, plastic swords can only be used against plastic, foam covered simulators against foam simulators, and metal swords against metal swords.

F. EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM OUTLINE

1. PHASE ONE. Phase One will last for a minimum of twelve months, beginning 1 October 2017. Phase 1a will last for a minimum of twelve months, include thrusting, beginning December 2018. Subsequent phases will be scheduled based on test results. During Phase 1:
 - a. Participating riders should report their experiences to their Kingdom Equestrian Officer, and KEOs should provide a report to the Test Program Administrator at the end of the first month and then at three and six months using the Rossfechten Evaluation Report below. Any potential hazards or injuries will be reported immediately.
 - b. The Rossfechten special weapons will only be used at equestrian practices or in individual challenge matches at events. They are not allowed in tournaments.
 - c. Any potentially hazardous issues will be reported to the Earl Marshal, the KEO, and the test program administrator as soon as possible.
 - d. At the end of twelve months (end of Phase 1):
 - 1) Each kingdom participating in the experiment will provide a report to the Test Administrator and will include number of events and practices at which Rossfechten was done, the number of Rossfechten participants at within the kingdom, and the overall view of the kingdom on whether Rossfechten is a good program or not (for that specific kingdom)
 - 2) The Test Administrator will consolidate the kingdom reports and make a report to the Society Equestrian Officer on the outcome and forward all Test evaluation reports.
 - 3) If the majority of the fighters conducting the test, the kingdom Earl Marshals, the Society Equestrian Officer, and the Society Earl Marshal approve, the testing will proceed to Phase II.
 - 4) If either the SEO or a majority of riders are opposed to moving to Phase II, at the SEO’s discretion Phase I will be extended for six months or the test will be ended.
2. PHASE TWO
 - a. The experimental weapons may be used by any appropriately authorized mounted combatant. Depending on input during Phase One, this may become a separate authorization from normal mounted combat.
 - b. The experimental weapons may be used in tournament with the approval of both combatants and the marshals.
 - c. Riders and marshals will be solicited for commentary on the weapons.
3. PHASE THREE
 - a. If the testing warrants, a complete test report will be submitted to the kingdom and Society

marshals to peruse legalization as standard weapon types allowed in mounted combat.

Submitted by
Lord David Whittaker, Caid
mka David Parish-Whittaker
Contact parishwhittaker@gmail.com

ROSSFECHTEN EVALUATION REPORT

Kingdom:

List of events / practices at which Rossfechten was done:

Number of participants at each event/practice:

What different activities/scenarios were conducted at each event/practice?

Top 3 Weapon lengths: _____

Top 3 Weapon types: _____

Material/Brands of top 3 weapons: _____

Armor Worn _____

Typical weapon striking power as compared with rattan/foam:

Typical weapon durability as compared to rattan/foam:

Feel of the weapon as compared to rattan/foam:

Comments & Recommendations:

APPENDIX A

NOTES FROM HISTORICAL MANUALS

Unfortunately, period discussions of horseback sword work are not as plentiful as, for example, longsword work on foot. However, there are certainly enough to give us a basic understanding of the principals involved. The Fiore and Ringeck manuscripts have been extensively studied and utilized by members of the SCA and Historical Martial Arts groups, so they can provide us with a good starting point. While there are some obvious differences between foot and mounted work, with a basic understanding of their respective systems we can explore and extrapolate from the mounted plays we do have.

Fiore de Liberi (circa 1400)

The following commentary and plays are based on the horseback section of the Fiore de Liberi manuscript. Great thanks to the Hopologia Association, which has placed facsimiles of the relevant sections online, with translation by Tom Leoni.

<http://hopologia.org/fr/fiori/f-index.html>

Note-- sword types are not specified, but it can be assumed from the illustrations as well as the rest of the Fiore manuscript that the riders in these plays are equipped with what we would call a longsword. The illustrated sword looks no different in length than the typically two handed sword we are familiar with for ground plays, but in these plays it is used one handed.

Fiore specifies nine specific plays, all starting from *Coda Lunga*, with the blade held down and back on the left. Plate one discusses it as good guard against an opponent thrusting from the left (as illustrated), and also against *reversi* (cuts from the opponent's off side) and *fendenti* (overhead cuts). Basically, an all purpose guard, with the main response to an attack being to beat the opponent's sword away, taking care to do so to the side, lifting the opponent's blade.

Plate One:



Plate two (on the next page) discusses the first four plays

--Beat aside the blow, put point at chest/head.

--Same play, but cut at the head if he is helmetless.

--If the opponent lets his blade hang statically after being beat aside, grasp it and cut or thrust to the head.

--Disarm followed by a strike. Presumably this is like similar disarm movements in the Fiore ms

Plate Two

Questo e lo pmo zogho che esse de la guardia de cada longa che qui denanzi. 3oe quello magro rebatte la spada dello suo inimigo. e metti gli la punta in lo petto, ouole in lo uolto come qui depinto

Questo sie lo secondo zogho che piu di quello rebatter. Io fliero costui sopra la testa che uero ben chello no e armado la testa.



Questo e un altro zogho lo terzo. che rebatte da la spada dello suo inimigo. ello la piglia cu la mane francha. E si gli fieri la testa. e cosi gli pora ferir de punta.

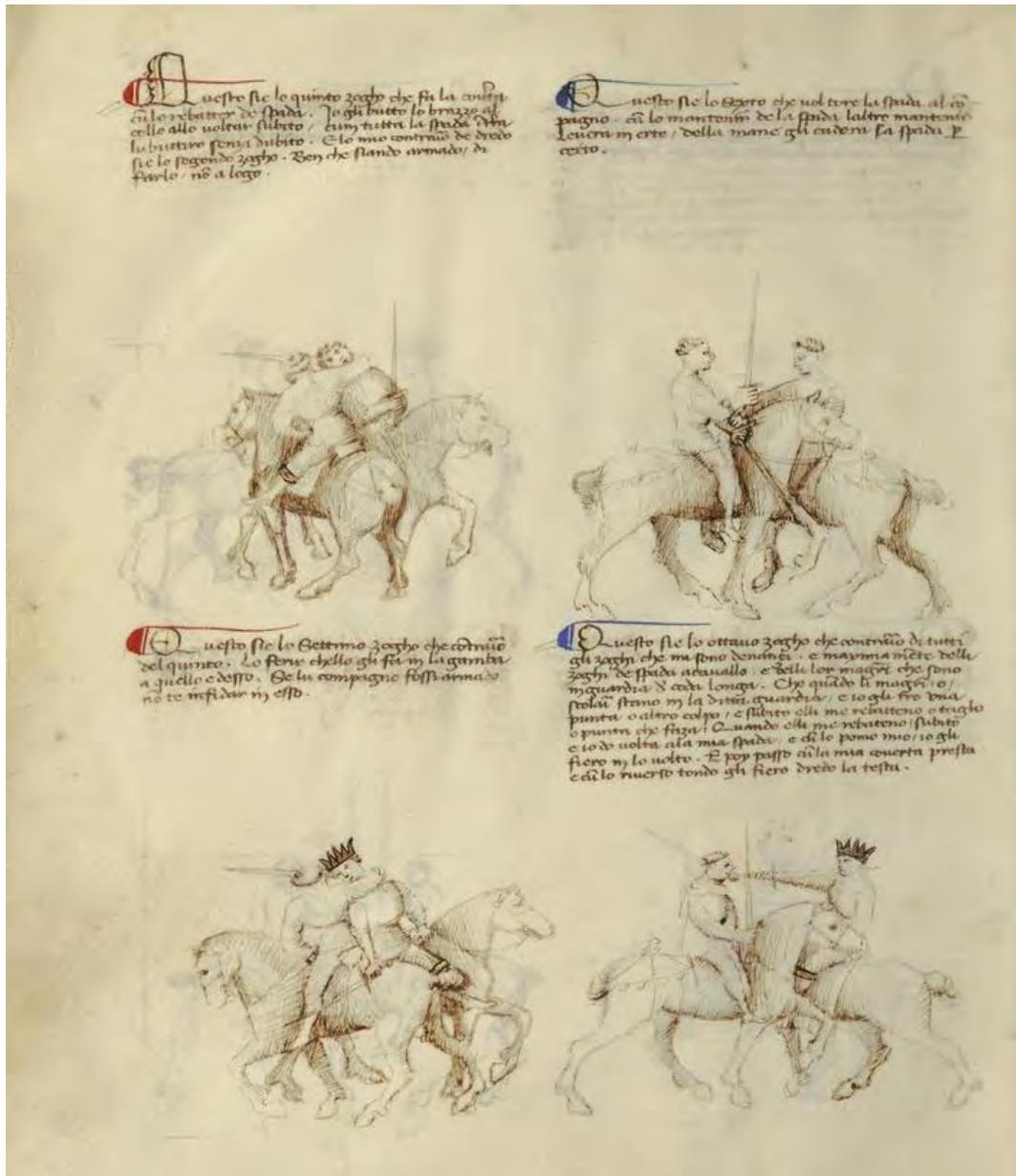
Questo sie lo quarto zogho che lo stolero gli uol ferir la testa. e tou gli la spada p qsto modo che uedete qui depinto.



Plate Three has the next four plays. It includes a few wrestling moves, which quite obviously are beyond the scope of this program.

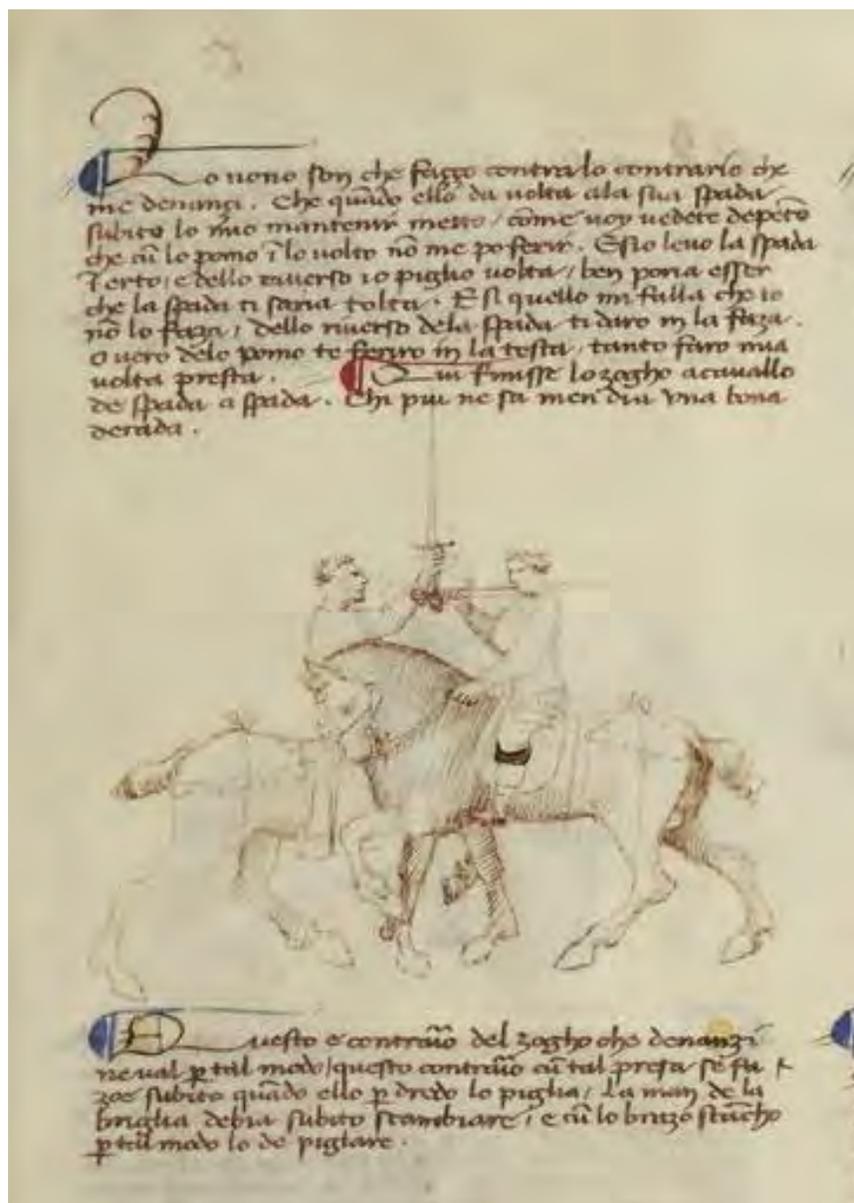
- Throw arm around neck after the beat aside and throw him to the ground. Not recommended in armor.
- Disarm to his grip if he turns his sword away and down.
- Strikes to leg from Coda Lunga. Not recommended against armored targets.
- For the eighth play, Fiore describes as how to defeat the various plays from Coda Lunga so far described (i.e, the standard beat aside counter). Throw the thrust or blow, then when they counter with a beat, flip your sword and pommel them to the face. Use this position as a cover as you ride by, then execute a quick *tondo* (horizontal cut) to the back of their head.

Plate Three



--For the ninth and final play, Fiore describes how to defeat the eighth. As your opponent attempts to strike with the pommel, lift and block with the hilt of your sword. Fiore notes that if at this time you throw a *riverso* (offside shot), you might disarm him (presumably, your hilt lifts his up). If that doesn't work, *riverso* to the face or pommel him since "the turn of my sword will be very quick". Note that the remainder of the plate is the beginning of Fiore's horseback wrestling section.

Plate Four



That's all for sword vs sword work. Fiore also has a number of plays with lance, lance vs. sword, ground vs. horse and wrestling, all well worth looking at. But for now, to quote him "With this ends the play of mounted sword against sword. If you know any more, give me a good portion of your wisdom."

Ringeck Manuscript (circa 1420-1440)

The Ringeck manuscript is well known for its treatment of 15th century German Longsword technique. It also includes a short section on mounted combat. While lacking the beautiful illustrations of the Fiore manuscript, it lists multiple guards and a few plays.

Many of Ringeck's plays involve finishing with a thrust to the face or a wrestling take down, both understandable moves if one is facing an armored opponent. Since there is an experimental program for thrusts, these plays are included here, but for now, thrusting is not permitted in this program. Wrestling take downs are not permitted, either, and unlikely to be so. Ringeck's discussion of moves including wrestling is included here strictly for historical interest.

Notes based on the translation and commentary provided by Christian Tobler in his book *German Medieval Swordsmanship* (Chivalry Bookshelf, 2001)

Guards

First Guard: Sword angled across the saddle, resting on left arm. Preparatory position for the *Taschenbau* ("pouch strike")

Second Guard: Right hand held "high above head", with point dropped to threaten the face of the opponent. Note the similarity to the foot combat guard of Ochs, as well as the opponent's position in the first image in plate one of the Fiore horseback section.

Third Guard: Sword held at right side by leg with the point rising up to threaten the opponent. Note similarity to *Pflug*.

Fourth Guard: Place the sword pommel on saddlebow, with the point upwards as with the third guard.

Fifth Guard Hold the sword across the saddle, grasping the middle of the blade with the left hand. This is the basic horseback halfsword guard. Tobler notes that while there are no Ringeck plays utilizing this guard, other contemporary German manuals use this guard in plays that hook the opponent's neck as he rides by. Such maneuvers are outside the scope of this program.

Mounted Nebenhut: Like the fourth guard, but drop the tip so the sword is "at ease", resting against the right leg.

Plays

--*Taschenbau:* Start in First Guard. Ride right to right. In response to a cut or thrust to the face, displace with the strong of your sword while rotating to Third Guard and thrusting from below to his face. If he displaces the thrust by moving "high up" with his sword, change the rotation to a cut at his left hands or reins. Ringeck adds that if you desire to distress his horse, you can cut at his right leg to send the horse running. Distressing horses is a prohibited maneuver in this program.

--A variant of *Taschenbau* that finishes with the hilt of the sword against the opponent's neck, grasping the pommel from behind to pull the opponent off his horse.

--If your point is displaced in *Taschenbau*, grasp his right hand with your left and thrust to his face.

--*Oberhau* (overhead strike). If your sword is displaced from an *oberhau*, use the momentum to rotate your pommel to his face. Ringeck finishes from here to grasping the helmet and throwing the opponent..

--If your *Oberhau* is displaced by a *Zwerchau*, move up high with your sword and thrust to his face (a basic *winden* move from German longsword). If he rides past you, move your right arm over his right, pressing his arm against you and take his sword.

--From *Nebenhut*, as the opponent approaches, raise your sword into *Langen Ort* (Long Point, basically pointed straight at the opponent).

--If from the previous play, the opponent displaces the thrust, wind up to the Second Guard and hang the point at his face. If he continues to ride at you, thrust to his face.

Note: the last play was referred to as “the first play in *Nebenhut*” in the manuscript, but unfortunately, the mounted combat section ends abruptly here.