

Scholars of Alcalá
San Diego, CA

Meyer's Dussack



Name: _____

Meyer's Dussack

Level 1, 1st Revision

This workbook looks at the basic techniques used in the German dussack tradition. This workbook is based primarily on the works of Joachim Meyer.

Copyright

The primary source for this workbook is Jeffrey L. Forgeng's *The Art of Combat*. This is a translation of Meyer's *Fundamental Description of the Noble and Knightly Art of Fencing*, 1570. In order to abide by US fair use laws, we have limited ourselves to quoting only brief passages. Reading assignments will be from this text.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction and General Terminology

This chapter looks at basic concepts such as the parts of the sword and how to perform basic attacks. It includes a mixture of physical and written exercises, as well as quotes from the historic manuals.

Parts of the Dussack

- Knopf: Pommel
- Ort: Point
- Creutz: Quillons / Gefeß: Hilt
- Heft: Haft / Bint: Grip
- Schilt: Shield
- Klinge: Blade
- Stercke: Strong
- Schweche: Weak
- Lange Schneide: Long Edge
- Kurtze Schneide: Short Edge

Draw a sword here and label its parts.

Armor

This tradition was designed to be used both with and without armor.

Examples of an Edged Dussack

This photograph from the Wallace Collection shows an edged dussack that would have been used on the battlefield.



Examples of a Training Dussack

Training dussacks were often made of wood or leather. Here is an example of a leather dussack with a wood core from Purpleheart Armory.



And a wooden dussack from SPES Historic Fencing Gear.



Note that the historic version of the training dussack often had additional hand protection.



Carrying

The dussack is of a moderate length and could be worn at the waist by a scabbard or sheath.

Gripping the Sword

As you can see in the illustration above, it is customary to place the thumb in line with the back of the blade. This type of grip would continue to be used through the 19th century with the English military sabre, a descendant of the dussack.

The Salute

As a sign of respect, it is customary to salute at the beginning class and before any pair exercise or sparring. We shall be using a salute modeled after Hutton's salute for the sabre.

1. Stand with feet together, sword by your left side.
2. Bring the sword perpendicularly in front of the body, looking just over your hand.
3. Carry the sword over to the right side, and lower the point to the front about four inches from the ground.
4. Return the sword to your left side.

Langort (Longpoint)

The first guard or posture we'll be working with is Langort or Longpoint. Langort is the most important guard because nearly all attacks travel through, or end in, this posture.



Basic Footwork Part 1

Joachim Meyer

Therefore the combat masters of old who were very learned and experienced in this, stated in their twelve rules:

*Whoever first steps after the cuts
should not rejoice much of his skill.*

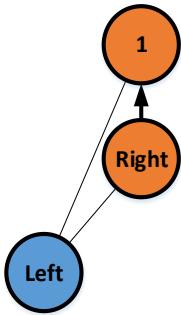
Therefore each stroke must have its own step, which shall take place at the same time as the stroke, if you wish to achieve anything with the devices you use. For if you step too soon or too late, then it is over with your device, and you thus defeat your own cuts. Therefore learn to execute the steps correctly, so that your opponent cannot proceed with his device as he wishes, but so that you (as it were) steal away the ground or space from him.

There are many different ways to step. Some of present in all styles of fencing, while others are mentioned only be a single school or even a specific master. Presenting them all at this time would be a disservice to the reader, so this section focuses only on the common steps. The remainder will appear in later workbooks.

In some of the diagrams you will see narrow lines without arrow heads. These are “stance lines”, the length of which is used to illustrate how narrow or wide ones stance is.

Increase

An increase is simply the act of moving the front foot forward. This can be used to change ones stance or for a quick attack.



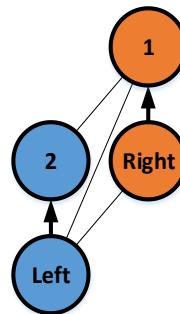
Here we see an increase used as part of a lunge.



Advancing Step

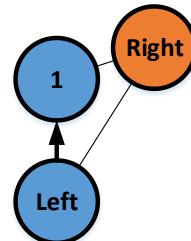
The advancing step begins with moving the front foot forward. The length of the advance should be roughly

one to one-and-a-half foot-lengths. A larger step than that risks unbalancing the fencer.



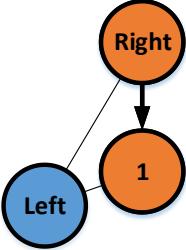
Gathering Forward

A forward gathering step is simply drawing the rear foot up to the front foot. This prepares you for making a larger step.

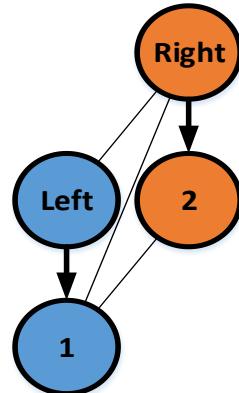


Gather Back

You can also gather your front foot back to meet your rear foot. This is useful when you want to put a little space between you and your opponent without actually changing your position.



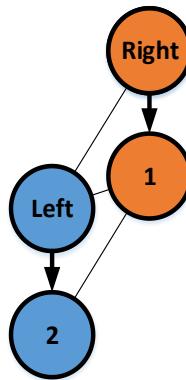
The second option is to push the rear foot back first. This is done by straightening the front knee. Its advantage is that your feet are never close together, which is less stable position.



Retreating Steps

The retreating step can be performed in two ways.

The first option is to move the lead foot close to the rear foot. Then slide the rear foot back. This is useful for quickly moving the body out of harm's way.



Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 1, Chapter 7.

Exercise 1 – Stepping

For this exercise, the sword is optional.

Assume the posture of Langort with the right foot forward. Perform an increase by pushing out the front foot one to two foot lengths, then completed the advancing step by pulling the rear foot up until your return to Porta di Ferro Stretta. Repeat several times, and then switch lead foot. (If using swords, you may optionally switch hands as well.)

From Langort, pull back your lead foot into a narrow stance. Immediately after completing this gathering step, increase the front foot back into our medium Langort. This action will be used to avoid the opponent's attack and then immediately counter-attack. Repeat several times with either foot forward.

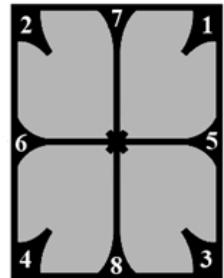
From Langort, gather your rear foot forward. As soon as they meet, increase your front foot by three or four foot-lengths. Then immediately draw your rear forward back into our medium Langort. This is done to allow for longer attacks than if your rear foot remained fixed. Again, repeat several times with either foot forward.

The Primary Cuts

There are various ways to refer to the primary cutting lines. In order to be consistent across all of the workbooks, we have chosen to use the Victorian numbering scheme, which you can see illustrated on the right.

The four basic cuts in Meyer's manual are:

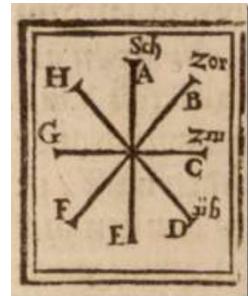
- Oberhauw – High cut (Line 7)
- Zornhauw – Wrath cut (Lines 1 and 2)
- Mittlehauw – Middle or Horizontal Cut (Lines 5, and 6)
- Underhauw – Low Cut (Lines 3 and 4)



The basic cuts may be performed with either the long or short edge. As a general rule, step with the right foot for cuts from the right (Lines 1, 3, and 5) and the left foot for cuts from the left (Lines 2, 4, and 6). For vertical cuts step with either foot.

Note: In older German manuals, any cut from above is an Oberhauw.

Meyer occasionally uses a lettering system, which you can see in the second chart on the right. The abbreviations on the chart refer to the cutting lines he refers to in some devices.



- Sch: Scheittellini – Parting Line
- Zor: Zornlini – Wrath Line
- Zw: Zwerchlini – Thwart Line
- Üb: Ubersich steyget lini

Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 1, Chapter 4. Introduction thru “Low Cut”.

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 3.

Four Openings

The body is divided into four openings: upper-left, upper-right, lower-left, and lower-right. Likewise, the head is divided into four openings. This is shown in the diagram for Langort. The purpose of a guard is to protect one or more openings.



Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 1, Chapter 1.

Sign Man

It is traditional for fencing schools to have a sign man posted on the wall. This is used to act as a visual reminder of the cuts and what lines they occur on. Using the space below, label the cuts and openings.



Exercise 2 Targets and their Effect on Range

Unless told otherwise, most attacks will be aimed at the height of your shoulder. To see why, you'll need a partner or pell.

Begin by throwing a strike at shoulder height, adjusting your range so that your tip just barely grazes your target. Without moving your feet, aim for locations higher and lower on the body, observing how the change in target affects your range.

Exercise 3 Stepping with Cuts

Having established where to attack, now it is time to look at when the foot lands. For this exercise, using a pell is preferable. Throw a number 1 cut with a step, ending with the arm fully extended. In this experiment, you'll try completing the cut before, at the same time, and after your foot lands.

In the space below, record whether you prefer stepping before, during, or after the blow lands.

Foot Lands Before Sword	Same Time	Foot Lands After Sword

Exercise 4 Meyer's First Drill using Half Cuts

Half cuts are useful because they leave your point online, threatening your opponent.

Joachim Meyer

*When he about to run in on you,
the point drives him from you.*

- 1:** For the first drill you will begin in Stier on the right, that is with the left foot forward, with the feet somewhat close together.
- 2:** Pass forward the right foot, cutting an Oberhauw (cut #7) into Langort such that the point aims at the chin.
- 3:** Gather forward the left foot. As you do this, draw back the sword into Hangort (Hanging point).
- 4:** Increase the right foot, again cutting an Oberhauw into Langort.
- 5:** Repeat steps 3 and 4 across the length of the room, ending in Hangort.
- 6:** Step backwards with the left foot, while cutting an Oberhauw into Langort.
- 7:** Gather back right foot into Hangort.
- 8:** Repeat steps 6 and 7 until you return to your original position.

Langort



Right Stier



Hangort



Repeat this drill using the right Zornhauw (cut #1), right Mittlehauw (cut #5), and left Underhauw (cut # 4).

Exercise 5 Meyer's First Drill using Full Cuts

Full cuts are usually used at the beginning of a fight or to deceive your opponent.

- 1:** For the first drill you will begin in Stier on the right, that is with the left foot forward, with the feet somewhat close together.
- 2:** Pass forward the right foot, cutting an Oberhauw (cut #7) into Wechsel.
- 3:** Continue around into Wacht while gathering left foot forward. Steps 2 and 3 should be one continuous action.
- 4:** Increase the right foot, again cutting an Oberhauw through Wechsel.
- 5:** Continue into Wacht by gathering the left foot forward.
- 6:** Repeat steps 4 and 5 across the length of the room, ending in Wacht.
- 7:** Step backwards with the left foot, while cutting an Oberhauw through Wechsel.

8: Gather back right foot into Wacht.

9: Repeat steps 7 and 8 until you return to your original position.

Wechsel



Wacht



Mittlehut



Repeat this drill using the right Zornhauw (cut #1) and right Mittlehauw (cut #5). Note that for Mittlehauw, you will be cutting through Mittlehut instead of Wechsel.

Exercise 6 Combination Attacks

This exercise can be done solo in or in a line. It begins with basic cuts and works up to the four-cut combinations known informally as Meyer's Cross.

High Combo

Step into Langort with the right foot forward. Increase the right foot while throwing a right Zornhauw (cut 1). Gather the left foot to the right, the increase the right foot while throwing a left Zornhauw (cut 2) back into a medium Langort.

From Langort, gather back the front foot. Throw a left Zornhauw (cut 2) while stepping back with the same foot. Repeat this gather and back step with right Zornhauw (cut 1).

Low Combo

Step into Langort with the right foot forward. Increase the right foot while throwing a right Underhauw (cut 3). Gather the left foot to the right, the increase the right foot while throwing a left Underhauw (cut 4) back into a medium Langort.

From Langort, gather back the front foot. Throw a left Underhauw (cut 4) while stepping back with the same foot. Repeat this gather and back step with right Underhauw (cut 3).

Cross Combos from the Right

From Langort, use an advancing step with a right Zornhauw (cut 1). Follow this with a retreating step and a left Underhauw (cut 4).

From Langort, use an advancing step with a right Ridoppio (cut 3). Follow this with a retreating step and a left Zornhauw (cut 2).

Cross Combos from the Left

From Langort, use an advancing step with a left Zornhauw (cut 2). Follow this with a retreating step and a right Underhauw (cut 3).

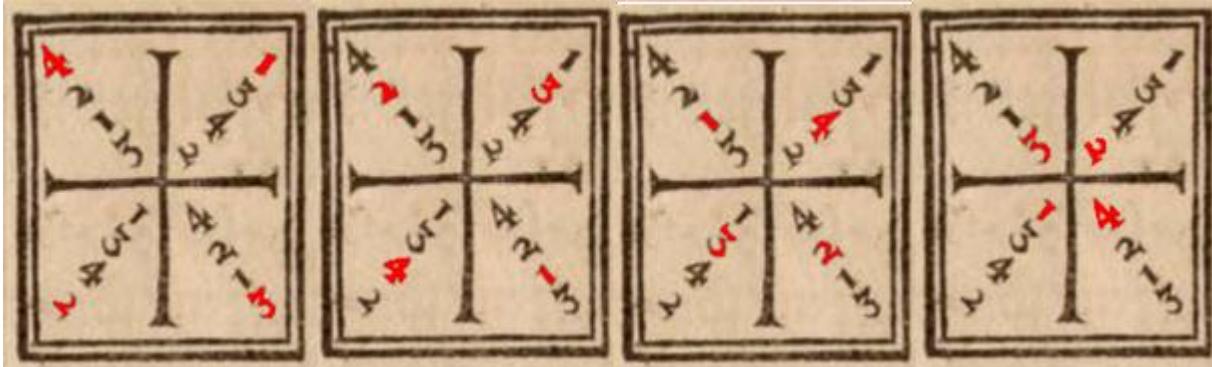
From Langort, use an advancing step with a left Underhauw (cut 4). Follow this with a retreating step and a right Zornhauw (cut 1).

Repeat this exercise with the sword in the left hand so that you can use either effectively. This will be especially important if you go on to study the use of two swords at once.

Exercise 7 Meyer's Cross

In order to become more familiar with the sword, the German author Meyer offers us four cutting patterns with four cuts each. Though we are studying Bolognese fencing, it is still useful to us. In the diagram below you can see the four patterns with each step in a given pattern highlighted in red.

These patterns are essentially just two cross combos from the same side. Since there are two sides and you can begin the pattern high or low, there are four basic patterns to practice.



If you prefer to use the Victorian numbering conventions, the patterns are:

1-4-3-2 3-2-1-4 2-3-4-1 4-1-2-3

Exercise 8 The Sword Dance Part I

Place a marker on the ground (e.g. a buckler or mask) between you and your partner. Stand such that your swords cross approximately one third of the distance from the tip to the hilt.

While stepping right, you and your partner throw a number 1 cut such that the blades clash. Then stepping left, throw a number 2 cut. Repeat with a number 3 and 4, stepping right and left respectively. This is known as the 1-2-3-4 pattern.

Once you can do this without error, extend the drill to include cuts 5 thru 8. Step right on odd numbers, left on evens. For cuts 5 thru 8 the blades will pass each other without touching.

This exercise shall serve as part of your warmup before each lesson.

Exercise 9 The Sword Dance Part II

Refer to Chapter 1 for the basics of the sword dance. Having done it a couple of times, we can alter our warmup to be a bit more complicated.

In this variant, you will be performing a number 1 cut with a step to the right between each normal cut. This is known as the 1-1-1-2 pattern. Continue it all the way to 1-8.

Once that pattern is well established, change to the 2-1-2-2 pattern. This is the same as above, except that there is a number 2 cut with a step to the left between each normal cut.

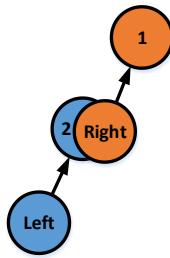
Chapter 2 – The Primary Guards of the Dussack

There are ten primary guards in Meyer's text. In due course each will be covered in depth, but for now it is important to simply be able to recognize each. But before we get into them, here are some additional terms that you may find useful for describing footwork.

Footwork 2 – Passing and Offline Steps

Slope Step

A slope step is simple an advancing step that moves at an angle instead of directly forward. Unless otherwise qualified, a slope step is done at roughly a 45 degree angle.

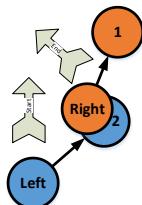


In the image below you can see a footwork diagram that may have been used for practicing slope and triangle steps.

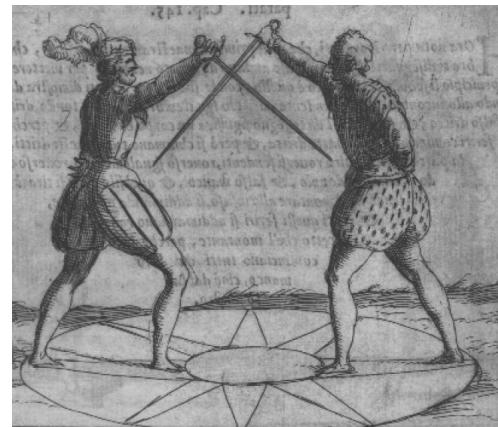


Compass Step

The compass step is simply a slope step that also changes the direction you are facing.

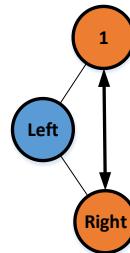


Circles such as this from Marozzo would have been used for practicing compass steps.



Passing Step

The passing step allows one to change lead foots. The length of the step will depend on whether you wish to widen or narrow your stance.



Passing steps can be forward or backwards. They can also be done as a sloping or compass step.

Zornhut (Wrath Guard)

The first guard is Zornhut or Wrath Guard. Its name is derived from the Zornhauw or Wrath Cut. This cut is also known as the Vaterstreich or Father Stroke.

Joachim Meyer

This posture is also used on both sides; from it one delivers the most powerful cut, which is called the Vaterstreich. Now the only difference between this posture and the Steer is that the Steer threatens the thrust, and the Wrath threatens the cut with wrathful comportment; and as regards the devices to execute from them, you can fight from one as from the other. And although this Wrath Guard presents the one side quite open, you can nonetheless execute many and diverse clever and strong devices from it, a few of which I will relate and present here.

The left Zornhut has the sword over the left shoulder. The more common right Zornhut over the right shoulder.



When you stand in this guard, note how the rear foot is turned backwards. The sword is held so far behind the back that the point is somewhat toward the opponent.

Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 10.

Exercise 1 Stepping Out

This drill illustrates a simple attack and dodge. While dodging is rarely used on its own, it is important to learn this technique before adding the sword. To begin, two fencers face one another in right Zornhut. One is designated the attacker or “agent”. The defender is referred to as the “patient”.

While the patient stands motionless in right Zornhut, the agent throws a Zornhauw (#1 cut) at the patient fencer to verify his measure is correct. This is known as a “ranging shot” and should be done before every drill.

After resetting, the agent repeats the Zornhauw. The patient will “step out from his stroke with your right foot well sideways to his left side toward him”. Do this slowly at first, then increase the speed as you become comfortable with the technique.

For the purpose of this exercise, the agent should refrain from intentionally aiming at where the patient will be rather than where the patient starts. While your cut will somewhat track the patient’s movement, overdoing it will prevent them from learning the footwork.

Exercise 2 Counter-cut to the Hand

While the dodge, as known as a void, can be useful, it is much safer to combine it with a counter-cut. This is a cut that is used to simultaneously parry the incoming attack and hit the opponent.

Beginning with both fencers in Zornhut on the right, the agent throws a ranging shot as before. Then the fencers reset.

The agent throws a Zornhauw. The patient steps out as before. At the same time, the patient will cut towards the agent's hand in order to stop his attack. While in theory either the step or the counter-cut is enough, the combination is much safer.

Warning

Be extra careful when aiming the hand. The fingers are especially vulnerable to breaking, so wear adequate safety gear for the speed and type of training sword you are using.

Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 10. Second Device.

Exercise 3 Counter-cut to the Face and Hand

This variation of the counter-cut has the patient cutting through the agent's face just before striking the hand.

As you perform this exercise, do note the phrase "through the face". If you stop your cut at the side of the head, you won't actually stop the opponent's sword.

Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 10. First Device.

Exercise 4 Hanging Dussack

An alternative to the counter-cut is the hanging dussack. Begin as we have before, but this time the patient will slip his sword over his head so that he catches the blow on his long edge. The posture will resemble the illustration.

Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 10. Fifth Device.

Wechsel (Changer)

Wechsel is one of Meyer's favorite guards. When discussing it in the longsword manual he claims that every device (series of techniques) can be executed from it.

Joachim Meyer

In this guard, position yourself thus: stand with your right foot forward, and hold your dusack beside you pointing to the side with extended arm, with the tip toward the ground, so that the short edge stands toward the opponent, as shown by the large figure on the right in the previous Image N. It is called the Change because you come into this guard through the Change Cuts; and it goes on both sides.



Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 15.

Exercise 5: Short Edge Parries

In this drill, the patient will start in left Weschel. The agent will resume Zornhut, checking his range as before.

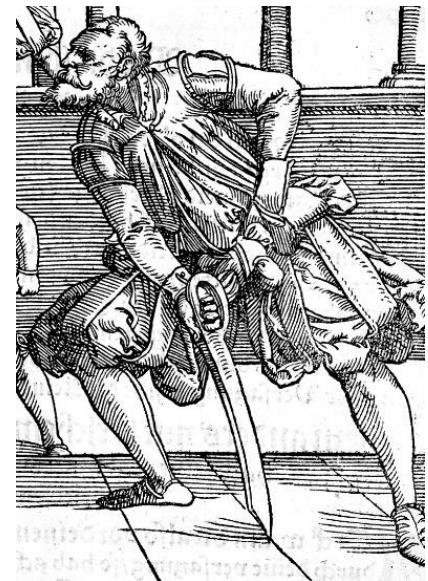
As the agent will throw a natural Zornhauw as before. The patient will step to his left while performing his own cut with the short edge. Rather than stopping the Zornhauw, the purpose of the short edge cut is to deflect it such the Zornhauw falls harmlessly towards the ground.

Repeat with the agent starting in left Zornhut and/or the patient in right Wechsel. Also try it against the Oberhauw (vertical high cut).

Experimentation is a big part of interpreting historic fencing manuals. In the space below, indicated whether it is better to step to the right or left when using the short edge parry.

Right Wechsel

Zornhauw to your left	Oberhauw	Zornhauw to your Right



Left Wechsel

Zornhauw to your left	Oberhauw	Zornhauw to your Right

Exercise 6 Cross Change

The cross change drill is the last of the primary drills offered by Meyer.

1: Begin in **right Zornhut**.

2: Cut a **Zornhauw** (#1 cut) with a passing step into **left Wechsel**.

3: Gather the left foot forward while **slashing up with the short edge** (#4 cut).

4: Continue moving the left foot forward such that you complete a passing step. As you do this, pull your sword around your head and cut a **Zornhauw** (#2 cut) from your upper left, ending in **right Wechsel**.

5: Gather the right foot forward while **slashing up with the short edge** (#3 cut).

6: Continue moving the left foot forward such that you complete a passing step. As you do this, pull your sword around your head and cut a **Zornhauw** (#1 cut) from your upper right, ending in **left Wechsel**.

7: Repeat steps 3 thru 6 three or four times.

Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 3. "A Cross Change".

Stier (Steer)

Just as we have the Zornhut as a high guard for the cut, we have Steir (Steer) as the high guard for the thrust.

Joachim Meyer

This posture is not unlike the Plunge, and is one of the best postures, from which all kinds of techniques can be appropriately executed using all the cuts at the Onset in the Before. For this posture, position yourself thus: stand with your left foot forward, hold your dusack with the hilt on the right beside your head, so that the tip of your weapon stands against your opponent's face, as shown by the large figure on the left in the present image [L] who is in the middle of a step. And the posture is essentially a gathered thrust from above.

Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 9.



From this posture, on the left or the right, practice thrusting.

Exercise 7 Combo Thrust into a Cut

Meyer often talks about the advantages of mutating a thrust into a cut or vice-versa. In this exercise, the agent will start in Steir and the patient in Zornhut or Wechsel. As always, have the agent perform a ranging shot before beginning the exercise.

1: The agent shall thrust from right Steir using a passing step.

2: The patient will counter the thrust with a cut of his choice.

3: As soon as the agent feels his sword being pushed to the side, he will step in the opposite direction his sword is moving. While doing this, he'll bring his sword around for a cut to the patient's arm.

Mittlehut (Middle Guard)

The next guard is the natural end for a horizontal cut.

Joachim Meyer

I call this the Middle Guard because it arises from the Middle Cut. Now you can come into this guard at the end of three cuts: first when you strike a Crooked Cut from your right through the Wrath Line, and let it swing beside your left right back into the Middle Guard; then through the Middle Cut itself; thirdly when you strike a Crooked Cut from below through the upward diagonal line from your right toward your left. These three cuts always swing most readily to the Middle Guard, even if you try to pull them to another.

Position yourself for it as shown by the figure on the right in this image [C]. From this guard you can execute all the devices that are taught in the left Wrath and Steer; therefore I will only briefly recount a few devices, from which you will sufficiently learn the use of this guard.



Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 14.

Eber (Boar)

Our first low guard is Eber (Boar). This is a useful guard to take when the opponent assumes a high guard and may also be used to bait the opponent.

Joachim Meyer

You have heard something about the high postures along with their devices; now follow the low postures by which the high guards are countered; for when your opponent fights you from above, then you shall fight him from below. The guard of the Boar is used only on the right side



Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 13.

Exercise 8 Countering cuts with a thrust

The patient fencer will stand in Eber (Boar) while the agent stands in Zornhut.

1: The agent cuts a Zornhauw (#1 cut) towards the patients upper-left opening with a passing step.

2: The patient uses a passing step such that his right foot lands inline or slightly to the left of the agent's right foot. While doing this he thrusts at the agent's face with his long edge to the left.

When performed correctly, the agent's cut will be parried with the long edge at approximately the same time the thrust lands.

Note that the patient's feet will be slightly crossed while performing this action. The crossing of the feet is necessary to ensure that the patient is well behind his sword during the parry.

Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 13. Eber device 2 (2.42r.2)

Langort (Long Point)

This posture is the natural end of half-cuts and thrusts. Furthermore, most cuts will pass through this posture.

Joachim Meyer

When is about to run in at you, the point drives him from you.



Wacht (Watch)

An alternative high guard for the cut is known as the Wacht (Watch).

Joachim Meyer

This Oberhut (High Guard) is the beginning of the High Cut, and it is called the Watch because you attend with a prepared stroke, and hold watch, so that if he opens himself before you by cutting, you can overreach him at once by cutting from above. For no matter how your opponent cuts at you, from this guard you can overreach him, or at least bring his cut to nothing and suppress it. For this guard position yourself thus: stand with your right foot forward, hold your dusack over your head, and let the blade hang down behind you.



Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 8.

Exercise 9 Überlauffen (Overreaching)

In this drill, we'll be looking at two of the simpler versions of Überlauffen (Overreaching).

Variant 1

The agent stands in Wacht or Zornhut on the right. The patient waits in Wacht with his right foot forward.

1: The agent throws a Zornhauw (#1 cut) at the patients upper-left opening with a passing step.

2: The patient pivots on his right foot, throwing his left foot to the right. While doing so he cuts down vertically (#7 cut) at the head.

Variant 2

The agent stands in Zornhut on the left. The patient waits in Wacht with his right foot forward.

1: The agent throws a Zornhauw (#2 cut) at the patients upper-right opening with a passing step.

2: The patient pivots on his right foot, throwing his left foot to the left. While doing do he cuts down vertically (#7 cut) at the head.

In each variant, the patient is turning his body away from the incoming cut while the superior reach of a vertical cut to his advantage. By aiming for the head, the strong (base) of the blade will intercept the agent's arm.

Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 8. Wacht device 1 (2.20r.1)

Bastey (Bastion)

Joachim Meyer

I believe the Bastey (Bastion) is so named by the combat masters of old because with it the lower part of the body serves the upper, just as the lower sections of a city wall are protected and shielded by a bastion. Position yourself for it thus: stand with your left foot forward; and lay your dusack extended far from you toward the ground, as with the Fool in the sword, except that here you shall send your hilt further in front of your left foot, and your upper body leans well after it. Now as you conducted yourself with the Fool, fight the same way from this guard in the dusack, with setting off and slicing off.

The Bastion can also be done this way: stand as before, and set your dusack before your foot with the point toward the ground, so that your hilt stands upward. If an opponent cuts at you wherever he will, then step out from his cut, and cut over at the same time as him; or catch his cut on your long edge, and work to the nearest opening. For there are many fine devices to execute from it, and you will find them above and below in this book.

Meyer doesn't offer an illustration of this guard, so here is the second version as depicted by Paulus Hector Mair. Note that in Mair's text this is referred to as Schrankhut (Barrier Guard).



For the first version of Bastey, simply invert the hand while keeping the point low.

Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 16.

Bogen (Bow)

Bogen (Bow) is a form of hanging guard, but with the point slightly higher than normal so that you have to option to follow with a thrust. Meyer tells us that this is the result of parrying from below, that is to say from a low guard such as Wechsel or Bastey.

Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 12.



Exercise 10 Parrying into Bogen from a Low Guard

The agent should assume any high guard from which he can cut downwards. The patient shall stand in Wechsel or Bastey with the right foot forward. The patient should use a somewhat narrow stance.

1: The agent uses a Zornhauw (#1 or 2 cut) or a Oberhauw (#7 cut) with a passing step.

2: The patient shall increase his right foot roughly one to two foot-lengths. While doing so, he'll parry the blow by cutting upwards into Bogen (Bow).

The patient's step isn't not strictly necessary, but it makes the parry easier by interrupting the agent's blow before it has reached full power.

Gerade Versatzung (Straight Parrying)

This is a strong defensive posture useful against both cuts and thrusts. Meyer considers this to be the best posture of them all because you can more safely wait for your opponent here than in any other guard.

Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 11.

Exercise 11 Parrying into Gerade Versatzung (Straight Parrying) from Bogen

The agent should assume Wechsel (Changer) on the right with the left foot forward. The patient shall stand in Bogen with the right foot forward.

1: The agent uses a Underhauw (#3 cut) with a passing step. This cut should be aimed at the patient's jaw.

2: The patient shall increase his right foot towards the cut while turning his hand into Gerade Versatzung (Straight Parrying).



Repeat this exercise with the agent in left Wechsel. Again, the patient should step slightly towards the attack to interrupt it.

Further Reading

Art of Combat, Book 2, Chapter 6. Gerade Versatzung device 1 (2.17r.1).

Exercise 9 Stepping into the Guards

Forms known as “devices” are an important part of how Meyer structures his material. While it is too soon for an historic device, this modern form can be used for memorizing the guards and practicing basic footwork.

- 1: Start feet together, dussack in the left hand (as if it were in a sheath).
- 2: Grasp the dussack with the right hand, raise up so that the “quillons” are just below the eyes in a salute.
- 3: **Pass back with the right foot** into **Zornhut (Wrath guard)**.
- 4: Execute a **Zornhauw** while **passing forward with the right** into **Wechsel (the Changer)**, figure on the right.
- 5: **Pass forward with the left**, executing an **Underhauw** into **Stier (Steer)**.
- 6: **Pass forward with the right foot**, executing a **Mittelhauw** into **Mittelhut**.
- 7: **Pass forward with the left foot**, executing a **Zornhauw** from the left into **Eber (The Boar)**.
- 8: **Pass forward with the right** and **thrust** into **Langort (Longpoint)**.
- 9: **Gather back the right foot** so that the heels touch and go into **Wacht (the Watch)**, figure on the right.
- 10: **Pass forward with the left**, executing a **Oberhauw from the left** into the guard of **Bastey (Bastion)**.
- 11: **Pass with the right foot forward** and execute an **Underhauw** into **Bogen (the Bow)**.
- 12: Execute a **Zornhauw** and land in **Gerade Versatzung (Straight Parrying)**, with an **increase of the right foot**.
- 13: **Gather back the right foot** so that the heels touch, raising the dussack into **Stier on the left**.
- 14: **Pass back with the right foot**, cutting into **Wechsel on the right**.
- 15: **Pass back with the left foot**, executing an **Underhauw** into **left Zornhut**.
- 16: **Pass back with the right foot**, using a **Zornhauw on the left** to land in **Eber**.
- 17: **Pass back with the left foot, thrusting** into **Langort**.
- 18: **Gather back the right foot** so that the heels touch, landing in **Wacht**.
- 19: Salute and place the dussack in the left hand as if placing it in its sheath.

Exercise 10 Offensive or Defensive?

For each of the primary guards, indicated whether it is meant to be used offensively, defensively, or both.

Guard (Posture)	Offensive or Defensive
Zornhut (Wrath Guard)	
Hanging dussack	
Wechsel (Changer)	
Stier (Steer)	
Mittlehut (Middle Guard)	
Eber (Boar)	
Langort (Long Point)	
Wacht (Watch)	
Bastey (Bastion)	
Bogen (Bow)	
Gerade Versatzung (Straight Parrying)	

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