

# *Virtual Fiore Book Club*

## Spear and Poleaxe

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Getty Pages 31r-v, 35v-40r  
7pm Eastern, April 25, 2021

<https://meet.google.com/djw-acnt-tux>



# Sources used

- Images from Getty Museum

<http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/1443/unknown-fiore-furlan-dei-liberi-da-premariacco-il-fior-di-battaglia-italian-about-1410/>

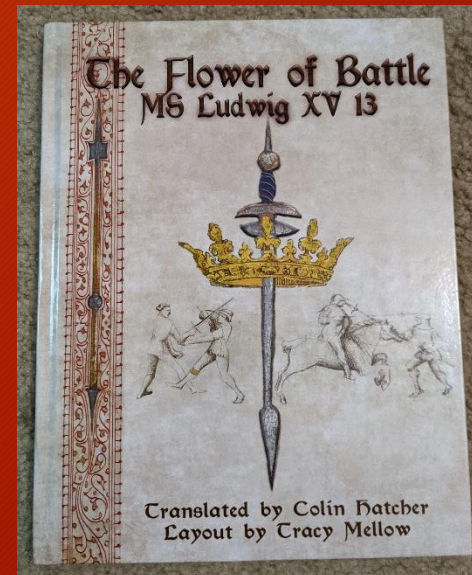
- Translations by Colin Hatcher

*The Flower of Battle: MS Ludwig XV13* by Colin Hatcher (Translator), Tracy Mellow (Designer), ISBN-13: 978-0984771684 [Buy it on Amazon](#)

or: [https://wiktenauer.com/wiki/Fiore\\_de%27i\\_Liberi](https://wiktenauer.com/wiki/Fiore_de%27i_Liberi)

- Alternative translations/names (e.g. Bastard/Mixed/Hybrid position) are sometimes inserted and play instructions are highlighted

- Photos and Video from our [LearnFiore.org](http://LearnFiore.org) website



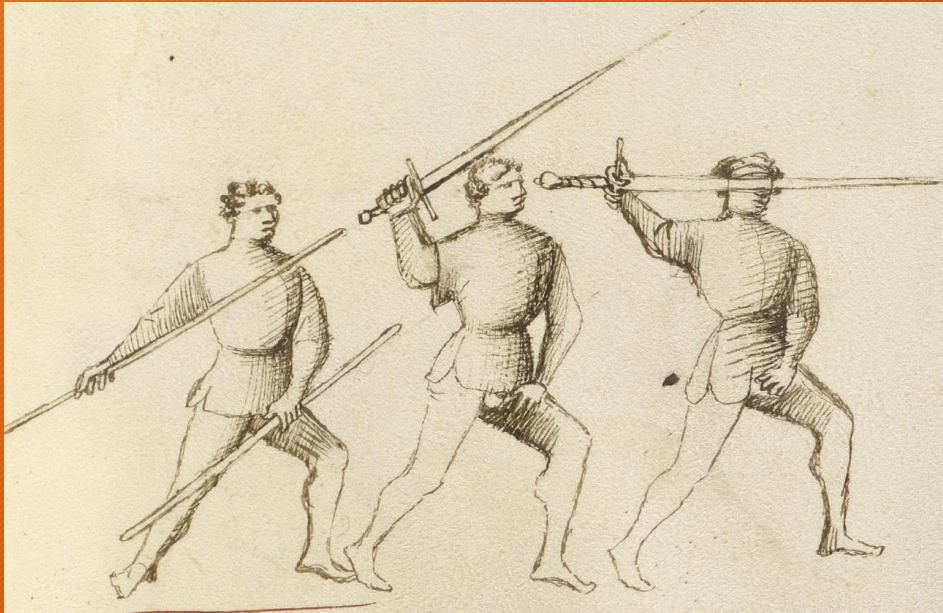


# Fiore's Spear and Poleaxe

Covers several sections

- Sword vs Spear - Getty pg 31r
- Staff & Dagger vs Spear - 31r-v
- Cudgels vs Spear - 31v
- (Armored Sword - 32r-35r not covered today)
- Armored Poleaxe - 35v-37v
- Armored Spear - 39r-40r

# Plate 1: (31r-a) Spear/Sword wielding Attackers



Here are three friends who seek to kill this Master, **who is waiting for them with his two handed sword**. The first intends to throw his sword at the Master like a spear. The second aims to strike him with a cut or a thrust. The third intends to throw two spears he has made ready, as you see drawn here.



## Plate 2: (31r-b) Remedy Master



I wait in this guard—the Boar's Tooth/Tusk—for these three to attack, but I could also wait in other guards, for example, left side Guard of the Lady or left side Window Guard, and with any of these I would be able to defend just as well as I can with the Boar's Tusk. Each of these guards uses the same method of defense. I wait unperturbed for them to come at me one after the other, and my defense will not fail against cuts, thrusts, nor any handheld weapon they throw at me. I advance my right front foot off the line and with my left I step obliquely, beating the incoming weapon aside towards my opponent's left side. And in this way I make my defense, first by making cover and then quickly counter attacking.



## Plate 3: (31r-c) Staff and Dagger Remedy Master



This master awaits these two with their spears. The Master, who is waiting with a staff and a dagger, sees that the first intends to attack with an overhand strike, while the second intends to strike underhand. Before one opponent attacks with his spear, the Master tilts his staff to the right, similar to the guard Full iron Gate, turning himself without moving his feet nor lifting the staff off the ground. And the Master waits in this guard. As one opponent attacks, the Master pushes the spear aside with his staff to the left, using his dagger too if needed. Following that cover, the Master steps and strikes. Both attackers with their spears will discover that this is his defense.



## Plate 4: (31r-d) Counter to Remedy Master



We were both planning on striking this master, but as you heard we can no longer do that, unless we deceive him (when he blocks our strike) by rotating our spear so that the steel blade is at the rear and then striking him with the spear-butt. Then, if he blocks the butt-strike, we'll rotate our spear again and strike him on the other side with the steel blade. That's how we will counter him.



## Plate 5: (31v-a) Student and Counter



This is the play of the Master who waits for those two with spears. The Master has in his right hand a dagger, and he keeps a stave straight in front of him in his left hand. **He can do the play in this way.** And I do it for him in his place. But if this player knew how to do well, he could have avoided the dagger's point. **If he had lifted his hands with the spear, and with the rest of the spear which remains at the rear-end, he had covered under my dagger,** which means crossing, it would not have happened to him. And he could have damaged me with his spear, if he knew how to do this counter to me.



## Plate 6: (31v-b) Cudgel Remedy Master



This Master defends with two cudgels against a spear, as follows: when the spear man approaches to attack, the Master with strikes at his opponent's head with the cudgel in his right hand. Then he quickly strikes with the cudgel in his left hand so as to make cover against the spear, and then he strikes his opponent in the chest with his dagger, as is shown next.

## Plate 7: (31v-c) Student and Counter



I show the play of the Master before me. If he had known the counter, he would have obstructed me as follows: **he would have lifted my hands with his spear by rotating it under my dagger**, and in that way he would have been able to obstruct me and destroy me. So take this, since you know nothing.



## Plate 1: (35v-a) Armored Poleaxe: Short Serpent Guard



I am the Short Serpent Guard and I consider myself better than the other guards. And whoever receives one of my thrusts will bear the scars. This guard delivers a powerful thrust that can penetrate cuirasses and breastplates. Fight with me if you want to see the proof.

## Plate 2: (35v-b) Guard of the True Cross



I am named the Guard of the True Cross, since I defend myself by crossing weapons, and the entire art of fencing and armed combat is based on defending yourself with the covers of crossed weapons. Strike as you wish, I'll be waiting for you. And just as the student of the First Remedy Master of the sword in armor does, so I can do with a step and a thrust with my poleaxe.



## Rewind: (33r-c) 1<sup>st</sup> Remedy Master of Sword in Armor



This cover is made from the True Cross Guard, when I step diagonally offline. And so that you can see what can be done from this cover, my students will show the plays that follow it, and since they are experienced in mortal combat, they will show these skills without hesitation.

## Plate 3: (35v-c) Guard of the Lady/Woman's Ward



I am the Guard of the Lady, and I go against the Boar's Tusk guard. If he waits for me, I will make a powerful strike at him, in which I move my left foot off the line, and then I pass forwards, striking downwards at his head. And if he blocks strongly under my poleaxe with his, then even if I can't strike him in his head I will not fail to strike his arms or hands.



## Plate 4: (35v-d) Middle Iron Gate\*



If my Middle Iron Gate is opposed by the Guard of the Lady, we both know each other's game, for we have faced each other many, many times in battle with swords and with poleaxes. And let me tell you, **what she claims she can do to me, I can do better against her.** Also let me tell you that if I had a sword instead of a poleaxe, then I would thrust it into my opponent's face as follows: when I am waiting in the Middle Iron Gate with my two-handed sword, if he attacked me with his poleaxe with a powerful downward strike from the Guard of the Lady, then I quickly advance forward striking him strongly under his poleaxe as I step off the line, and then I quickly grasp my sword in the middle with my left hand and make the thrust into his face. While there is little difference between we two guards, **I am the more deceptive.**

\*Called Boar's Tusk in other printings

## Plate 5: (36r-a) Long Tail Guard



I am the Long Tail, used against the Window Guard, and I can strike at any time. With my downward strikes I can beat every poleaxe or sword to the ground, setting me up nicely for close play. As you see the plays that follow, please consider each one in sequence.



## Plate 6: (36r-b) Window Guard on the Left



I am named Window Guard on the left, and I am made with the right arm pulled back. This is not a good guard to wait in. Everything I do is deceptive. You think that I am going to strike a downward strike, but I pass backwards and switch guards. So while I began on the left, I actually enter on the right. And I can quickly transition to the plays that follow.



## Plate 7: (36v-a) 1<sup>st</sup> Student



These are the plays that these guards put to the test. Each guard can do them, and each guard believes it will prevail. As is drawn here, **whoever beats his opponent's poleaxe to the ground** can do these plays, and will succeed as long as the opponent fails to counter him.



## Plate 8: (36v-b) 2<sup>nd</sup> Student



This student puts his axe between his opponent's legs, and covers his eyes with his left hand. When the opponent, who cannot see, tries to turn, he will surely fall to the ground.



## Plate 9: (36v-c) 3<sup>rd</sup> Student



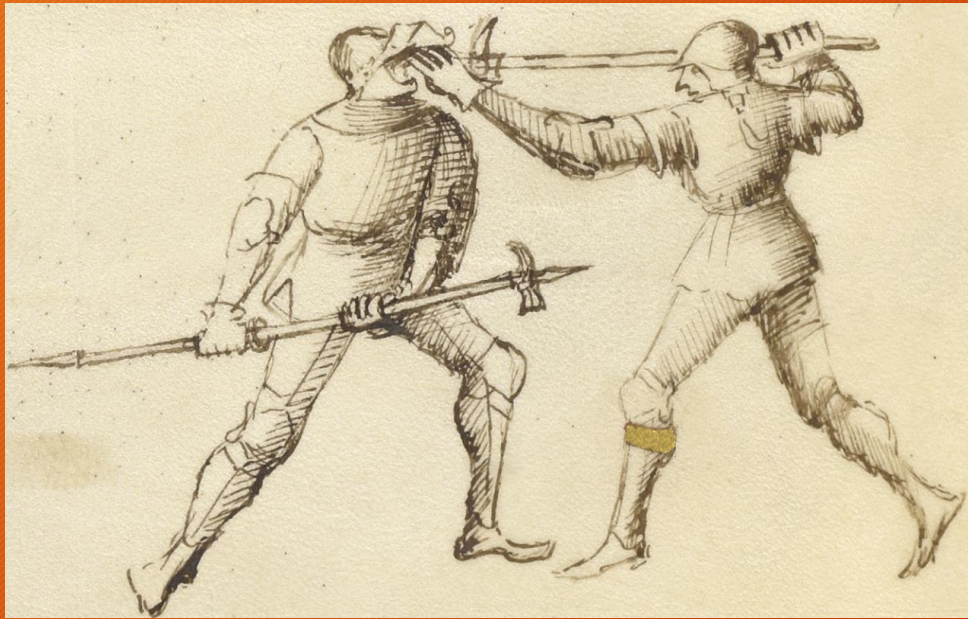
The previous student can also do this play when he is at close range, as you can see here. He steps with his left foot on top of his opponent's poleaxe head, and draws back his own poleaxe, then thrusts it into his opponent's face.



PD image is reversed and not stepping on weapon



## Plate 10: (36v-d) 4<sup>th</sup> Student



The previous student saw that it was not possible to strike his opponent in the face with his poleaxe, because his opponent's visor is too strong. So he advances his left foot forward and lifts the opponent's visor, and drives his point into his face with as much force as he can give to his poleaxe. You can add on this play to any of the previous plays, as well as to any of the plays which follow.



## Plate 11: (37r-a) 5<sup>th</sup> Student



With this hold I can strike you in the head with my poleaxe, and with my left arm I will put you in the Strong Lower Bind, which is more deadly than any other lock.



## Plate 12: (37r-b) 6<sup>th</sup> Student



With a half-turn of this poleaxe I will take it from your hands. And once I have taken it from you with this particular turn, I will strike you in the head with it, as the next student shows. And I do not believe you will survive this.



## Plate 13: (37r-c) 7<sup>th</sup> Student



This play follows on from the student before me. As he clearly told you, **you will likely drop to the ground dead after being struck in the head like this.** And if this blow is not enough then I can give you another. If I choose I can also drag you to the ground by your visor, which is drawn next.



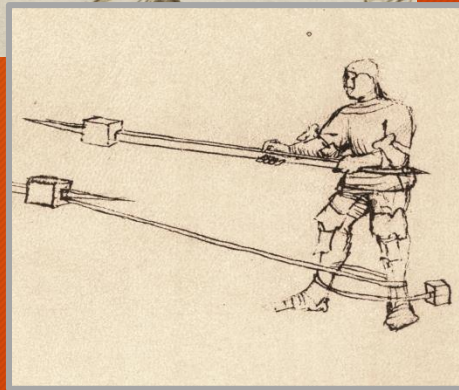
## Plate 14: (37r-d) 8<sup>th</sup> Student



I am demonstrating what the student before me said he would do to you, that is **dragging you to the ground by your visor**. This is a grappling technique that is one of the better ones you can do.



## Plate 15: (37v-a) Remedy Master



This play is easy to understand, and you can clearly see how I can drag him to the ground. And when I have him on the ground, I can drag him behind me. And when the long tail of my poleaxe can no longer hold him, then he'll feel my strikes.

PD shows a longer rope and mass



## Plate 16: (37v-b) Remedy Master



This poleaxe of mine is filled with a powder and is hollow and perforated. And **this powder is so strongly corrosive that the moment it touches your eye, you will no longer be able to open it, and you may be permanently blinded.**

I am the poleaxe, heavy, vicious and deadly. I deliver blows more powerful than any other hand-held weapon. If my first strike misses, then my poleaxe becomes risky to hold on to and is no more of any use to me. But if my first blow is powerfully made on target, then I can stop any other hand-held weapon. And if I am accompanied with good protective armor, then I can defend myself with any of the powerful striking guards of the sword.

My most noble lord, my Marquis, there are some vicious things shown in this book that you would never do. I show you them purely to aid your knowledge.

## (37v-d) Powder

This is the powder that you use in the poleaxe drawn above. Take the sap of the spurge, and dry it in a warm oven to make a powder. Now take two ounces of this powder and one ounce of powder of victim flower, and mix them together. Now load this powder into the poleaxe shown above. You can do this with any good caustic powder, but you won't find a better recipe than the one in this book.



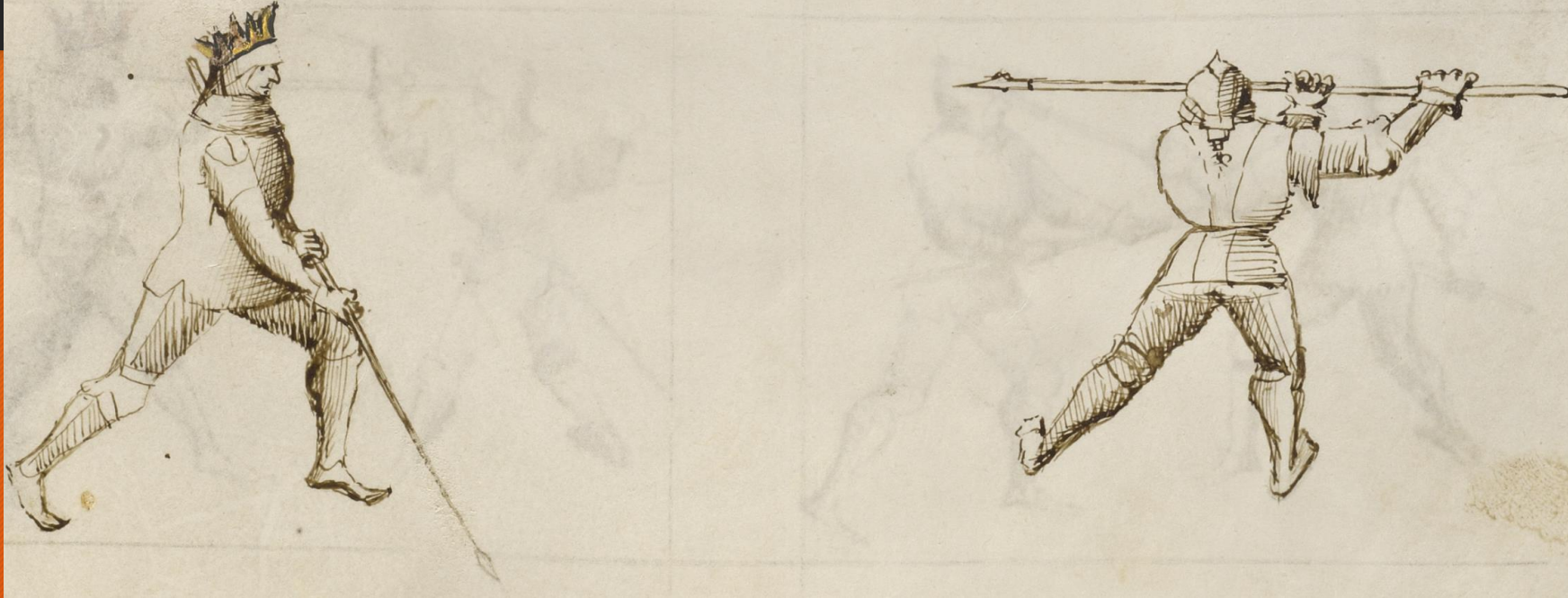
## Plate 1: (39r-a) Armored Spear - Low Iron Gate



We are three masters using spear guards that are closely related to the sword guards. I am the first, which is the Full/Low Iron Gate. I am positioned to quickly beat aside my opponent's spear, and to do that I step crosswise off the line with my right foot, crossing his spear and beating it to the left. When you step and beat aside together, that combination is hard to beat.



## Plate 2: (39r-c) Middle Iron Gate



I am positioned in the Middle Iron Gate. **My method is to beat aside then counter-strike.** Come against me as you will with short spear or staff, when I beat your weapon aside as I step I will never fail to strike you. When you are using a short spear or sword, all guards that are made with the point offline are sufficient for you to wait in when facing any long hand-held weapon. Guards that cover from the right are followed with a step and a thrust. Guards from the left side can also cover and beat aside, but these will wound with a strike, because they cannot effectively place a thrust.



## Plate 3: (39v-a) Right Side Window Guard



I am the noble Right Side Window, always **ready to beat aside and counter-strike**, and a long spear hardly bothers me. Also if I was using a sword I would wait for the long spear in this same guard, which beats aside and obstructs all thrusts. I can also exchange thrusts, or beat them to the ground without difficulty. I would finish this play with the play shown next.



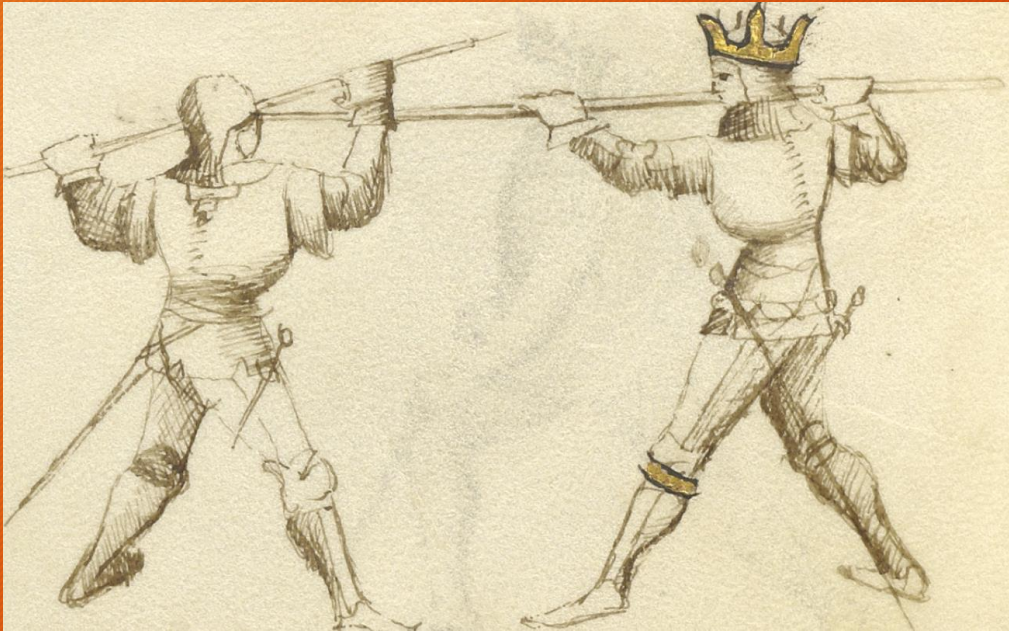
## Plate 4: (39v-c) Student



The three guards shown above (Full iron Gate, Middle Iron Gate and the overhead Right Side Window) should all finish with this strike, which is used to end the play and demonstrate their skill. Here I show the finishing strike for each of them.



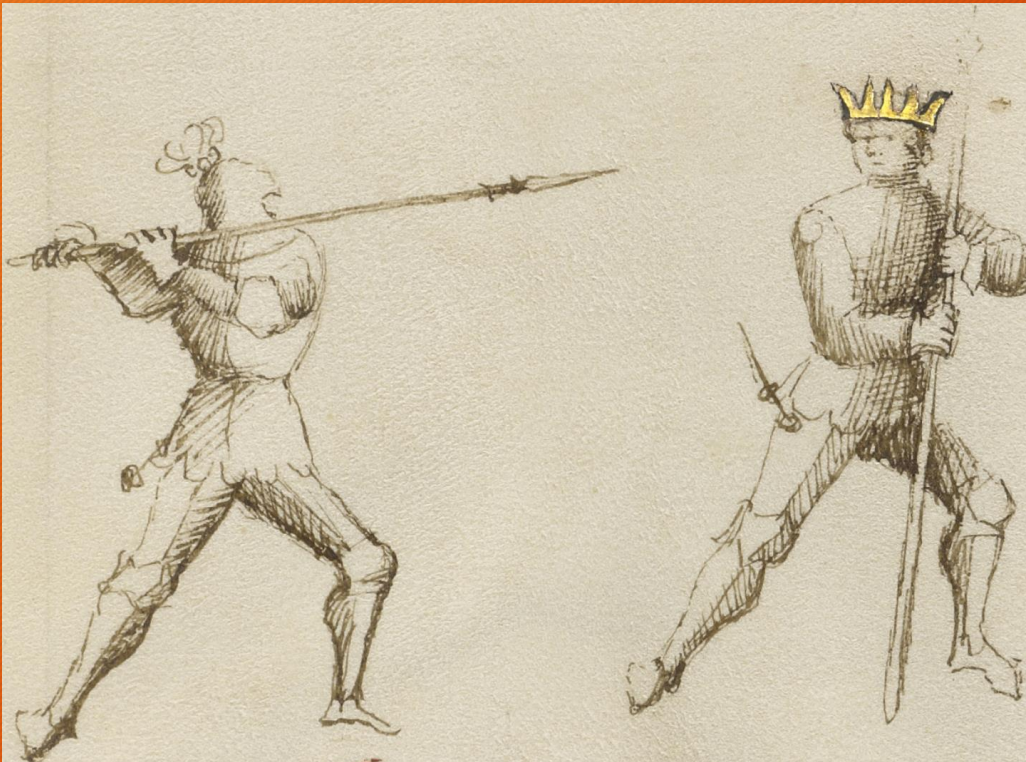
## Plate 5: (39v-d) Counter



This is the counter to the three spear masters shown above, who all finish their play with the strike shown above. Let me explain how to do it: **When the Master believes he has driven my spear off-line, I rotate my spear and will strike him with the butt end, which is steel-capped, like the point.** Thus, the plays of these masters pose little threat to me.



## Plate 6: (40r-a) Boar's Tusk/Tooth



We are three left side guards, and I am the first, in the Boar's Tusk. The left side guards do the same as the right side guards. **We step offline advancing our lead foot, and then we strike with our thrusts on the left side.** Both right side and left side guards beat aside then thrust, because other attacks with the spear are not as effective.



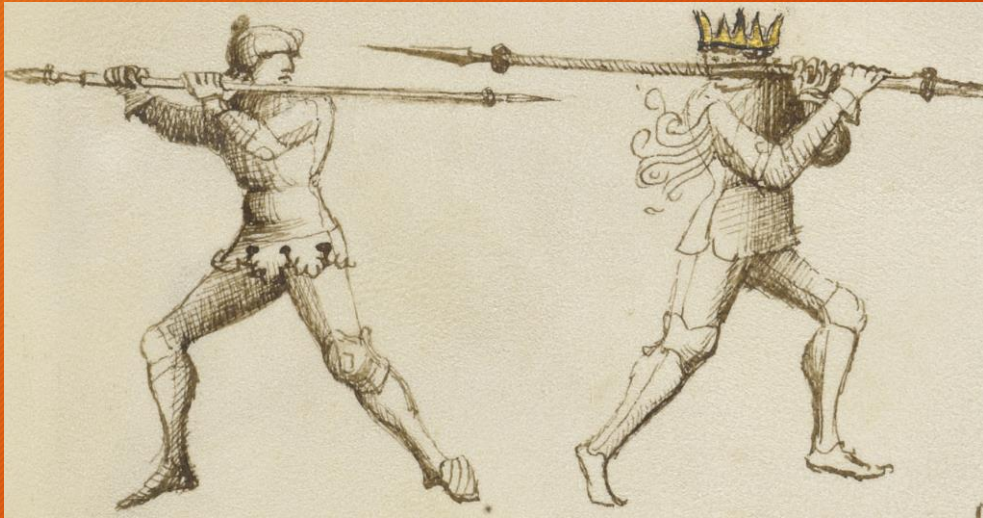
## Plate 7: (40r-b) Guard of the True Cross



I am waiting for you in the Guard of the True Cross. You have clearly approached too close to me. I will pass backwards with my leading right foot, beating your spear offline to my right. My thrust will not fail me. Yours however will fail you.



## Plate 8: (40r-c) Left Side Window Guard



I am positioned in the Left Side Window Guard. If I do not strike you with a thrust you will be lucky. I will step offline to the left with my left foot, with my point held high and my arms low. Then I will thrust into your face and you will have no defense. The play that follows is the finish used by all three Masters. If you try it once, you won't wish to try it again.



## Plate 9: (40r-d) Student and Counter



Here we end the plays of the spear that are made from the left side against threats and attacks. These three guards shown above are carefully chosen to easily defeat the long or the short spear, since they are effective in offense or defense.

The counter to this thrust is easily done: **when your thrust is beaten offline, you turn the butt of your spear and strike with that.** And with that I have now shown you enough of the plays of the spear.



# Bibliography - The Manual Itself

*Il Fior Di Battaglia: MS Ludwig XV 13*, Fiore Dei Liberi , ISBN 978-9527157114, \$30. [Buy it on Amazon](#) Facsimile of book with original Italian

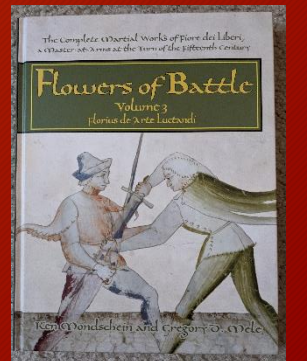
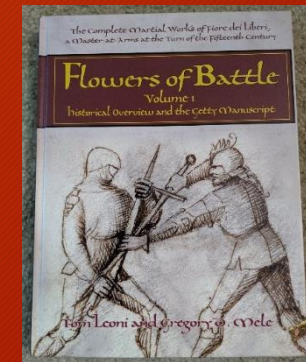
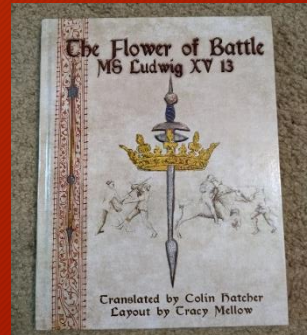
*The Flower of Battle: MS Ludwig XV13*, Hatcher, Colin and Mellow, Tracy, ISBN 978-0984771684, \$40. [Buy it on Amazon](#) Fiore's manual with text replaced by typed English in similar font.

*Flowers of Battle: The Complete Martial Works of Fiore dei Liberi*

- [Volume One: The Getty Manuscript and Historical Context](#), ISBN: 978-1-937439-18-7, \$125.
- [Volume Three: The Florius Manuscript](#), ISBN: 978-1-937439-19-4 , \$100.

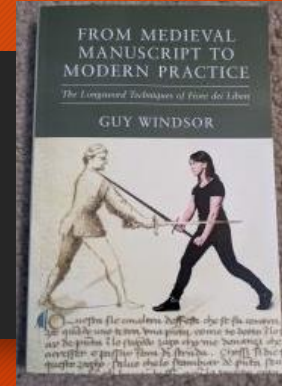
Buy at [freelanceacademypress.com](http://freelanceacademypress.com). Each page presented as a facsimile with translation on opposite page, plus lots of background information

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# Bibliography - Interpretations



*Fiore dei Liberi's Armizare: The Chivalric Martial Arts System of Il Fior Di Battaglia*, Charrette, Robert N., ISBN: 978-0-9825911-7-8, \$40. [Buy it on Amazon](#)

*Mastering the Art of Arms Series by Guy Windsor*

Vol. 1: *The Medieval Dagger*, ISBN: 978-1937439033, \$24. [Buy it on Amazon](#)

Vol. 2: *The Medieval Longsword*, ISBN: 978-9526819327, \$30. [Buy it on Amazon](#)

Vol. 3: *Advanced Longsword: Form and Function*, ISBN: 978-9527157060, \$30. [Buy it on Amazon](#)

*From Medieval Manuscript to Modern Practice: The Longsword Techniques of Fiore dei Liberi*, Windsor, Guy, ISBN-13 : 978-9527157558, \$25. [Buy it on Amazon](#)



# Tir-y-Don Fiore Study Group


Website: [LearnFiore.org](https://www.learnfiore.org)

YouTube channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm\\_ZYLv4GLH4deU5NXXhUWQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm_ZYLv4GLH4deU5NXXhUWQ)

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### Virtual Pennsic University

Posted on July 18, 2020 by LearnFiore

With the SCA's largest annual gathering, Pennsic, canceled for 2020 due to Covid-19, various virtual partial replacements are being set up.

Pennsic University is being virtualized as a temporary YouTube channel that people can submit videos to. We have submitted a merged version of our Applying Fiore to SCA Combat videos (our group's channel has it in two parts, VPU will have it in one part). There should be lots and lots of other cool classes on all areas of interest to the SCA. [You can find VPU on YouTube here.](#)

**Quote The Master:**  
"I am the sword and I am lethal against any weapon; lances, axes and dagger are worthless against me.... Come against me and feel the pain."


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- [Happy New Year!](#)
- [University, Feb 2, 2019](#)
- [Using Fiore in SCA Combat video posted](#)


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Some introductory videos explaining our purpose, our sources, our tools, and some safety issues. Some introductory videos explaining our purpose, our sources, our tools, and some safety issues.




1:31



1:05



1:31



2:12

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Videos on analyzing Fiore's approach and drilling skills to use that approach. Videos on analyzing Fiore's approach and drilling skills to use that approach.



4:14



3:13



16:17

### Practice and Drills

### Using Fiore in SCA Combat

### Using Fiore in SCA Combat



# Next meeting

Fiore's Mounted Combat

Getty Pages 41r-47r

7pm Eastern, May 16, 2021

<https://meet.google.com/qec-jxsu-xcv>

