Fiore’s Sword in One Hand

Master Llwyd Aldrydd, OP, OD
BaronLlwyd.org
LearnFiore.org
Outline

• Background
• 13 Plates - as time permits
  • Examine illustration and text
  • Discuss implementation as described
  • Discuss application to SCA combat rulesets
• Bibliography
Tir-y-Don Fiore Study Group

Website: LearnFiore.org
YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm_ZYLv4GLH4deU5NXXhUWQ
Sources

• Images from Getty Museum

• Translations by Colin Hatcher
  or: https://wiktenauer.com/wiki/Fiore_de%27i_Liberi
Quick Background

• 1409 publication
• Earliest known complete European combat system
• Sections include wrestling, dagger, swords, armored combat, pikes, spears, and mounted combat
• 4 copies known to survive, the Getty copy is the most complete, each is different

• Page numbering
  • Each sheet of paper/vellum is numbered
  • Front of each sheet is called “recto” or abbreviated “r”
  • Back of each sheet is called “verso” or “v”
The Sword in One Hand

• One of the shortest sections in the manual
• 13 figures with corresponding text
• References a dagger play when fighters are close
• Plays are fairly similar to each other
Common Concepts

• Cover
  • Having your sword between their sword and your body.

• Measure
  • Distance between two fighters
  • Directly related to the time you have to react
  • For these plays, the closer you are, the more oblique the movement will need to be and the faster the initial cover has to be.
  • Demo videos are at fairly long measure, so movement is less oblique and more linear.
Here are three opponents who all want to kill this Master. The first aims to kill him with a thrust. The second intends a cut. The third will throw his sword at the master like a spear. If the Master can perform a mighty deed and avoid being killed, then God will have indeed blessed him with great skill.
Attacker can thrust, cut, or throw

- Each of the plays to come will work regardless of the type of attack being used.
- We’ll demonstrate against thrusts and show one example against a cut as well.
You are cowards and know little of this art. You are all words without any deeds. I challenge you to come at me one after another, if you dare, and even if there are a hundred of you, I will destroy all of you from this powerful guard. **I will advance my front foot a little off the line, and with my left foot I will step crosswise, and as I do so I will cross your swords, beating them aside and leaving you unprotected.** I will then strike you without fail. And even if you throw your spear or sword at me, I will beat them all aside in the same manner I described above, stepping off the line as you will see me demonstrate in the plays that follow, and which you would do well to study. And even though I am only holding the sword in one hand, I can still perform all of my art, as you will see demonstrated in this book.
Initial Position

Where is the opponent?
• What direction?
• What distance?
Layout of Plates 1 and 2 may give us some hints
I’ve done what my teacher told me to do. That is to say, I stepped off the line making a strong cover. Having rendered my opponent unprotected I now easily place a thrust into his face. And with my left hand I’ll demonstrate that I can take his sword and send it to the ground.
I have rendered you completely unprotected, and now I will easily strike you in the head. And if I choose to pass forward with my rear foot, I can perform close range techniques against you, such as locks, dislocations and grapples.
From this position I can easily strike or stab you. And if I advance my front foot forward, I can lock you in the middle bind, as shown in the third play of the first Remedy Master of the dagger. Alternately I can do the play shown next, and strike and lock you as shown there.
I will lock your arm in the middle bind, and I will do it in such a way that you will not be able to give me any trouble. And if I wish to put you to the ground I will do so with little effort, and you will have no chance of escaping.
Version with bind
Here both your sword and your arm are effectively trapped, and you will not be able to escape before I strike you as described, because you have shown you know nothing of this play.
Here I can easily strike you while taking your sword, and by rotating it in your hand I will make you drop it as the only way to prevent yourself being thrown to the ground.
Plate 7 - Responding to a cut
Here I can strike you from the front, but this is not enough. By gripping your elbow I make you turn away, then I wrap my sword around your neck from behind, and you will have no defense to this.
Plate 8
In the previous drawing I told you I would turn you and then quickly wrap my sword around your neck, as shown here. And if now I fail to cut your throat, then I am a pathetic fool.
You aimed a thrust at me and I beat it to the ground. Do you see how you are now unprotected and can be struck? And I can also turn you and do you even more harm, by striking you from behind.
Because *I turned you by pushing your elbow*, *I have quickly come to this position and from here I can throw you to the ground, where you will no longer be able to fight me or anyone else.*
This opponent struck at my head, and I beat his sword to the ground, coming to the position you see depicted here. Now after forcing you to turn away I will aggressively wrap my sword around your neck.
This is a play where if you wish to make this kind of thrust, you should be armoured. If your opponent strikes at you with a thrust or a cut, you first make your cover, and then quickly counter attack as shown.
Bibliography - The Manual Itself


*Mastering the Art of Arms Series by Guy Windsor*

