



Vadi's longsword : Giocco Largo

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Toulouse HEMA Gathering – Vadi 2014

THEMA VADI 14

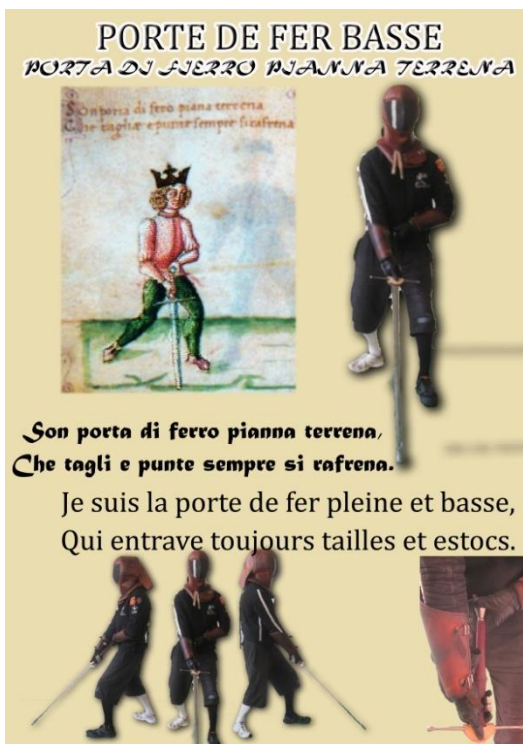
Toulouse, 06.12.2014

First Hour: basics of Vadi's longsword, *Posta & Colpi*.

1.1 *Posta*

The *posta* are the 12 stances given by Philippo Vadi in his book. The first exercise consist to show all of them and make the students remember them.

There is a first group, the low ones: *Porta di Ferro*, *Porta di Ferro Pienna Terrena*, *Dent di Cenghiare*, *Cenghiare*.



Then the high ones, on the center: *Dona, Falcon, Longeza, Corona.*

DAME
DONA



*Jo son posta di dona e non son vana,
Che lungheza di spada spesso inghana.*
Je suis la garde de la dame et je ne suis pas vaine,
Car la longueur de l'épée trompe souvent.



FAUCON
FALCONE



*Son posta di falcone suprana e altera,
Per far defesa a ciascuna maniera.*
Je suis la garde du faucon haute par-dessus tout,
Pour faire la défense de toutes les manières.



ALLONGEE
LONGEZA



*Son posta breve di spada longeza,
Spesso ferisco con lei torno in freza.*
Je suis la garde courte de l'épée allongée,
Souvent j'attaque en donnant un tour.



COURONNE
CORONA



*Jo son corona e son fatta maestra,
De legature mi ritrovo destra.*
Je suis la couronne et je suis maîtresse,
Dans le lien je me trouve adroite.



And finally the high ones, on the sides: *Sagitaria*, *Frontal*, *Finestra*, *Corta*.

ARCHER SAGITARIA



**Son posta sagitaria per ingegno,
Uso malitia assai nel mio regno.**
Je suis la rusée garde de l'archer,
J'utilise la malice dans mon règne.



FRONTALE FRONTAL



**Son posta frontal tanto sicura,
De taglii e punte mai non farò cura.**
Je suis la garde frontale très sûre,
Des tailles et des estocs je n'ai plus à me soucier.



FENETRE FINESTRA

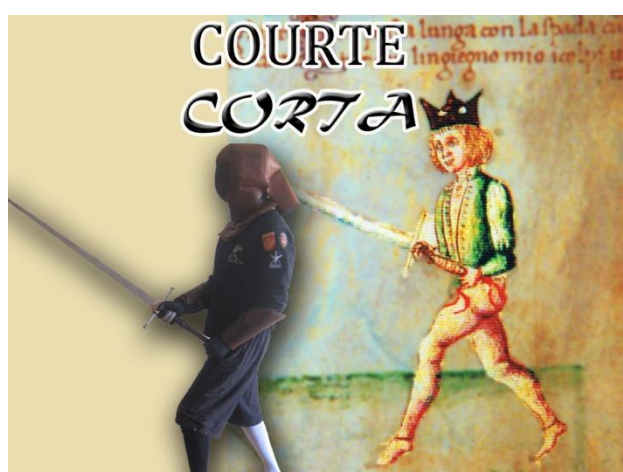


**Jo son la posta di vera finestra,
Leva de l'arte la cossa sinistra.**

Je suis la garde de la vraie fenêtre,
Levant avec art les affaires de gauche.



COURTE CORTA



**Son posta lunga con la spada corta,
Che son l'ingegno mio i culpi urta.**
Je suis la garde longue de l'épée courte,
Avec ma ruse je pare les coups.



Exercise: They are shown and made to repeat, step by step, and then all together.

1.2 *Colpi*

These are blows that gives Vadi, in Chapters III, V,VI and VII, and in the scheme of Colpi (see below):

Ch.III: "The Art of the sword only consists in crossing,/ Putting both strikes and thrusts in the right place/ Bringing war to those opposing you./ on one side the blows are used to defend;/ there the forehand blows should go,/ while backhand blows should attack the other side./ The true edge should strike with the right blow,/ [...] *Riverso* and false edge go together."

Ch.V,:" Of Thrusts and Cuts/ The sword has a point and two edges,/ But note well and understand this text,/ That memory will not fail you. / One is the false, and the other the true, / And reason commands and desires, / That this is fixed in your brain. / Forehand and true edge go together, / Backhand and false edge stay together,/ Except the fendente which wants the true./ Understand my text well,/ The sword goes with seven blows/ Six cuts with the thrust that strikes./ So that you will find this seam,/ Two from above and below and two in the middle,/ The thrust up the middle with deceit and suffering,/ That our Air is often calm."

Ch.VI,:"We are the fendenti and we make quarrels,/ To strike and cut often with grief, / The head and the teeth with the right reason. / And all guards that are made low to the ground, / We break often with our cunning,/ Passing from one to the other without trouble./ The blows make a bloody mark,/ When we mix them with the rota/ We support the entire art./ Fendente for striking we are well endowed,/ Returning to guard from pass to pass,/ Note we are not slow to strike./ I am the rota and I have in me such a load,/ That you want to mix me with the other blows,/ I place a thrust often at a bow./ I cannot be courteous or loyal/ Turning I pass through forehand fendente/ And destroy arms and hands without delay./ People call me Rota by name,/ I seek the false of the sword/ I please the mind of he who uses me./ We are volanti, always crossing/ And from the knee up we go,/ Fendente and thrusts we often banish./ By crossing us pass without fail,/ The Rota that come up from below,/ And with the fendente warms our cheeks."

Ch.VII,:" I am he that quarrels with/ All the other blows, and I am called the thrust./ I carry venom like the scorpion./ I feel so strong, bold and quick,/ Often I make the guards plough again/ When I am thrown at others and confront them/ By my harmful touch, when I join them."

COLPI

Questi son colpi de spada due mane

Non gli é el mezo tempo: nel nodo rimane Voici les coups de l'épée à deux mains

Ils ne sont pas dans le demi-temps: ils demeurent dans le noeud

Rota/rotation

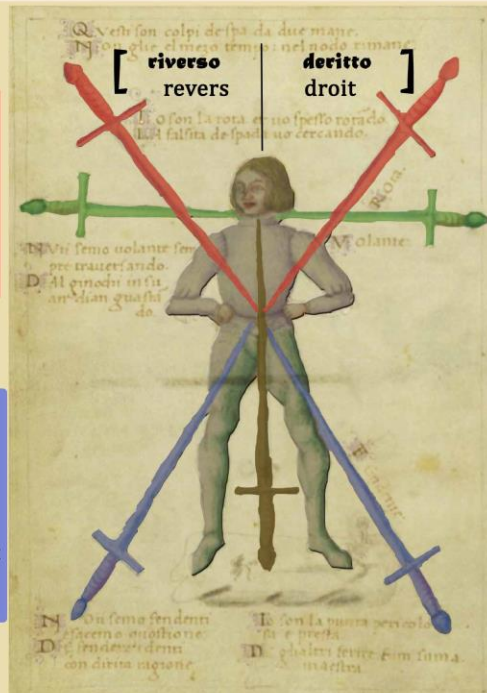
**Io son la rota et vo spesso rotando
La falsità de spada vo cercando**

Je suis la rotation et je tourne souvent
En recherchant le faux tranchant de l'épée

Fendente/fendants

**Noii semo fendenti e facemo quotione
De fendere i denti con dirita ragione**

Nous sommes les fendants et notre issue est
De tailler les dents dans une voie droite



Volante/volants

**Nuii semo volante sempre traversando
Dal ginocchi in su andiam guastando**

Nous sommes les volants et nous allons traversant
Vers les coudes nous apportons la blessure

Punta/estoc

**Io son la punta pericolosa e presta
De gli altri ferire sum suma maestra**

Je suis l'estoc dangereuse et rapide
Je suis le maître suprême des autres coups

[Rotation, fendants et volants se font du côté revers comme du côté droit, ce qui donne trois coups avec deux possibilités chacun, soit six coups, plus l'estoc qui lui reste médian, ce qui donne un total final de sept coups.]

This gives the thrust blow, *Punta*, and three cutting strokes, left and right, so the final six: *Fendente*, *Volante*, *Rota*, *Fendente Riverso*, *Volante Riverso*, *Rota Riverso*.

Exercise: first sequence: the practitioners repeats the blows; second sequence: we mix the blows with the stances seen in 1.1.

1.3 Posta vs. Colpi

Exercise: Step 1, "slow motion" A made a guard, no matter which one, B gives the right shot, attacking where the sword leaves an empty space (low guard = shot from above, high guard = shot from below);

Step 2: A must parry by passing an appropriate guard - must be one of those seen previously (high guard against a high kick, low guard against a low blow).

Example: A stands in *Porta di Ferro*> B gives *Fendente Dritto* (direct)> A pass in *Posta Frontal*.

Evolution1: same exercise, more dynamic.

Evolution 2: A can respond by assessing the strength of B on the iron. If B is weak, it lends a thrusting; if B is strong, A let him passes and double with a *dritto* or a *riverso*.

1.4 Opposing guards

All the stances are shown face to face in the codex, and they correspond to each other, some pairs more easily than others (see 1.1). For this part we will study two pairs.

Exercise 1: *Finestra* vs. *Corona*:

A stands in *posta Finestra*, B *posta Corona*. A gives forehand and backhand (*mandritto*, *manreverso*) over B obviating keeping in every time property the tip towards the head of A; A as well worked blows in *Rota*, sequence of similar hits *Zwerchau* in the German tradition.

Exercise 2: *Sagitaria* vs. *Longeza*:

More complex, it is to develop *posta Sagitaria*; A is *Sagitaria*, B *Longeza* and walks towards A; A must to pass its point under the blade of B (the weak part) and uncrossing his arms to rotate the sword so that A's hilts block from B's sword, sending the tip to the head B and extending his arms to avoid the danger.

Second Hour: *Giocco Largo* specificities and the first illustrated play.

2.1 Crossing at the tip of the sword with the *mandritto*.

We work here on the large play, the "iron feeling", and the right blows. In all the exercises, the opponents have to cross the swords on the lasts tiers of them.

Ch.XIV: "[...]Because it [the *Mezo Tempo*] remains in a knot/ The shortness of the tempo of his strike./ The half time is just one turn/ Of the knot: quick and immediately striking,/ It can rarely fail/ When it is done in good measure."

Ch.X:" If you wish to make a *stramazzone* at someone/ Do it with a small turn to the face/ Don't make a very wide turn/ Because all long movements are for nothing."

Exercise 1, static:

A is high guard and attacking, B guard low and defending.

Step 1: check the distance, A gives a forehand on B which lets himself be touched;

Step 2: same as step 1, but B defends itself, without retreating.

Step 3 option 1: B is weak on iron, at this point A realizes the *Mezo Tempo*, "swift movement of the wrist" according Vadi, that is to say that A crosses his arms to rotate his sword and it slides on B's blade, and estoque B's face.

Step 3, option 2: B is strong on iron, A let him passing, reversing his sword the tip down and immediately doubles with a *manreverso* to B's head, moving to the side and changing its shoulders axis.

Variation: A must feel the strength of the iron and act accordingly.

Exercise 2, dynamic:

Same guards, Step 1 Same as in Exercise 1.

Step 2: Same as in exercise 1, but this time B takes a step back parrying.

Step 3 option 3: B backs parrying is low on iron; A feint thrusting, then spreads the tip of the blade B of a sudden turning reverse on the blade (*stramazzone*), taking care to cover up and protect himself (*coverta*), and A doubles the blow on B's head.

Step 3 option 4: B backs parrying is strong on iron; A lets it pass as in option 2, and gives in *fendente Riverso* on the head of B by a stretching out his leg to compensate for the distance.

Variation: A must feel the strength of the iron and act accordingly.

Exercise 3: B selects one of four options, A must act accordingly.

2.2 The first illustrated play, the *fendente riverso*.

Translation of the verse accompanying the illustration below:

"I have made a *roverso fendente* on the left foot,
Without changing the foot turning the hips
I strike a *dritto* [right blow] without further movement."



Exercise 4, static:

A is high guard and attacking, B guard low and defending.

Step 1: check the distance, A gives a *fendente riverso* (same position as in the picture) on B which lets himself be touched;

Step 2: same as step 1, but B defends itself, without retreating.

Step 3 option 5: B is weak on iron, at this point A realizes the *Mezo Tempo*, A uncrosses his arms to rotate his sword and it slides on B's blade, and estoque B's face.

Step 3, Option 6: B is strong on iron, A let him passing on the left, and immediately doubles with a *mandritto* to B's head, moving to the side and changing its shoulders axis ("turning the hips").

Variation: A must feel the strength of the iron and act accordingly.

Exercise 5, dynamic:

Same guards, Step 1 Same as in Exercise 4.

Step 2: Same as in exercise 4, but this time B takes a step back parrying.

Step 3 variant 3: B backs parrying is low on iron; A doubles immediately his blow, rejecting strongly the opponent's blade, and stretching out his front leg to compensate for the distance.

Step 3 variant 4: B backs parrying is strong on iron; A realizes B's gesture and behavior (*vista*); A must then give a violent blow on the tip of B's blade (low) to fall back to the ground and immediately double its *fendente Riverso* to reach to the head.

Variation: A must feel the strength of the iron and act accordingly.

Exercise 6: B selects one of last four options, A must act accordingly.

Exercise 7: A selects a side to attack, B selects one of eight options, A must act accordingly.

Last hour: transition to the *Giocco Stretto*.

3.1 Chapter XIII technique.

"Hammering": Accustom the opponent, distract him, by hammering his head in order to surprise him. The principle is to bring the opponent to do whatever we want, and to be able to know what's going on and what to do, to master the fight.

Ch.XIII:" Being then joined at the half sword,/ You can well hammer more and more times,/ Striking on only one side,/ Your feints go on the other side./ And when he loses his way with parrying,/ And you hammer then on the other side,/ Then you should decide/ If you need to finish by closing in./ And if you want to throw blows,/ Let a *fendente roverso* go,/ Turning it across /And a false edge with the point in his face./ Do not be divided from his point,/ With *roverso* or *mandritto*/ With whichever you can work./ Because the knees bend on every side./ Following that which I showed you above,/ I repeat for you again this addition,/ Always enter with the point,/ Forcing upwards from below, finishing in the face/ And you can strike just at the right time."

Exercise 1: A accustoms and uses B hammering on each sides, while B parries, and A “surprises” B with a *Mezo Tempo* when he wants.

Exercise 2: A hammers B’s blade (like in the exercise 1), the gives to B a blow from below on the right (*volante riverso*), with the false edge; as B parries, A do a *Mezo Tempo*, turning well the hilts, and thrusts B’s head.

3.2 Chapter XV technique.

Ch.XV:” [...]That if the companion [opponent] is in the iron door guard,/ He can hurt you in the heart,/ You should be in *posta sagitaria*,/ Watch out that your point does not waver,/ That of the companion covers from his sword;/ Go a little out of the way/ Straightening the sword and the hand with the point./ When your sword is joined at the crossing,/ Then do the thirteenth constrained action,[...]”.

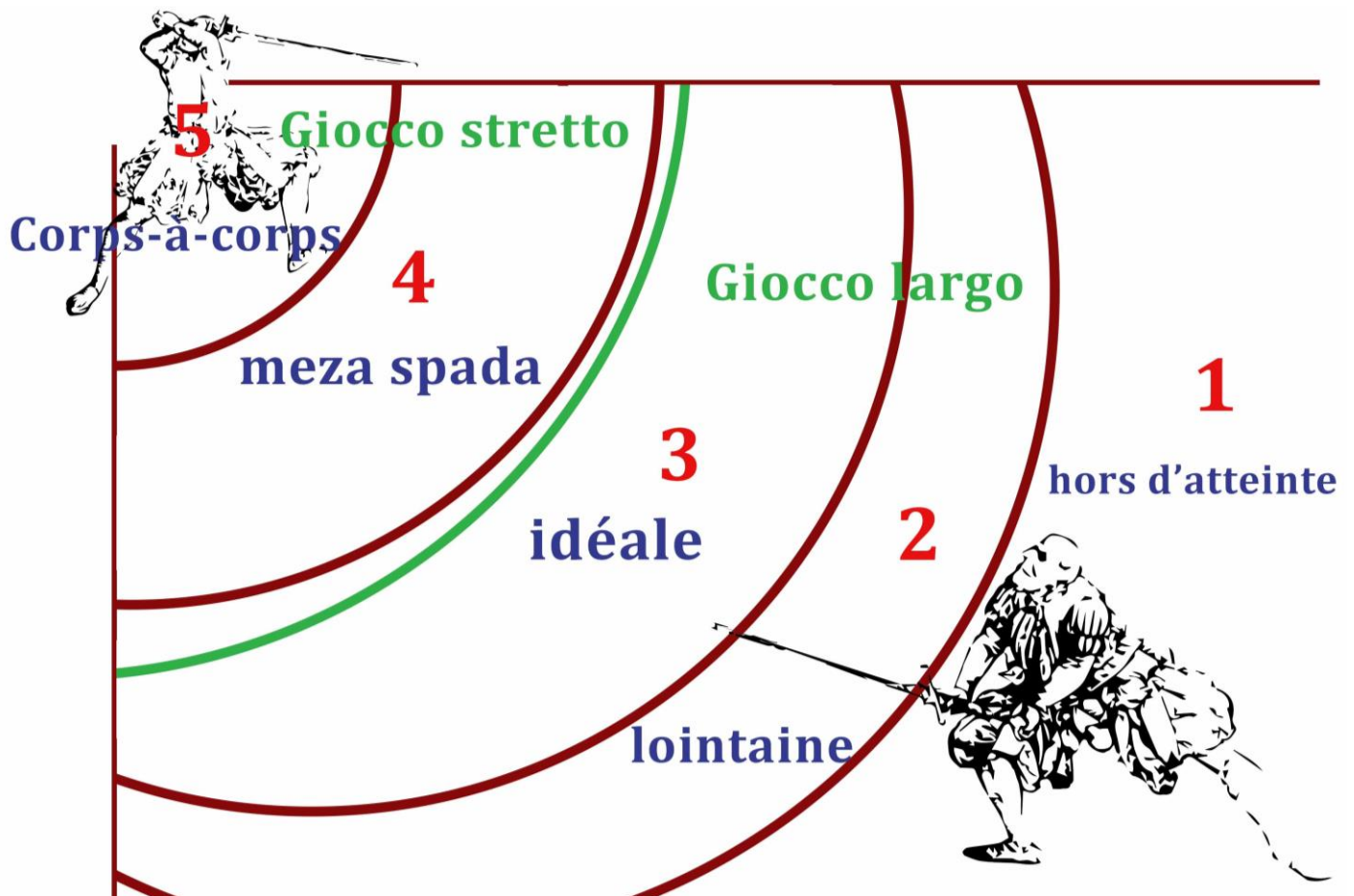
Exercise 2:

Step 1: B is in *Porta di Ferro* stance, and thrust A to the heart, stretching his leg, from his front foot.

Step 2: (step1), A is in *sagitaria* stance, parries the thrust of B, and develops the *sagitaria* stance technique (as seen during the first hour, 1.4 opposing guards, exercise 2 *Sagitaria* vs. *Longeza*), just to protect himself from B’s blade.

Step 3: (step1, step2), A go out of the way, and try a close combat technique, whatever he wants, whatever he have on mind (punching B with the fists, the pommel, trying to rob B’s sword, etc.).

3.3 Recognize the proper distance.



Giocco Largo (large play)

- 1: Out of reach**, you and your opponents have to walk to each other to be dangerous.
- 2: Away**, each of the two opponents have to do one footstep and extend the arms to touch each other with a blow (with the tip of the sword) or a thrust.
- 3: Ideal**, you have to do one footstep and extend your arms to touch your opponent, which he have to do one step back when he parries to be properly safe.

Giocco Stretto (close combat)

- 4: Meza Spada**, that's the signal given by Vadi: when swords are crossing (*croce*, the moment of the contact) in their middle (half-sword), the distance is good to enter in close combat and to do a technique that he gives.
- 5: Body-to-body**, close fight.

Exercise: A choose the guard he wants, and closes his eyes; B choose a distance except out of reach), a guard, and call A by his name, which one open his eyes, recognize the distance, and must attack B accordingly with the distance:

Option 1: B is away, A have to do some footsteps covering itself with protecting stances (in case B attack him during he moves), and attacks B when he is at the ideal distance, choosing the side where there is no sword.

Option 2: B is at the ideal distance, the A attacks B, choosing the side where there is no sword.

Option 3: B is close, then A firstly protects himself from B's sword, and try a close combat technique (punching the face, stealing his sword, grappling, etc.).

Evolution: Same thing, but B attacks in "slow motion".

Evolution 2: after one second after A opened his eyes, B attacks with real speed (the two opponents must have complete protection gear for this part), and can eventually make one or two sparring movements.

End of the workshop, sparrings.

Sources:

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Special thanks :

William and Johann

L'Ost du Griffon Noir AMHE Toulouse

The THEMA volunteers

The THEMA participants



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