

**"De herte þe fote þe eye to accorde:" Procedural Writing and Three Middle English Manuscripts  
of Martial Instruction**

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by

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## Abstract

**Background.** London's British Library contains three manuscripts that record instruction in the use of personal arms in late medieval Middle English and are the only examples of this genre in English before 1595. These texts are part of a larger corpus of medieval European fight-texts but have not received detailed study.

**Aims.** The aim is to explain how and why these texts approach their subject of instruction as they do. These fight-texts have not been studied in relation to fight-instruction or other textual forms of procedural or performance knowledge. Explaining the factors that influenced the authorial process can give us a better understanding of late-medieval attitudes towards martial knowledge, technical and practical writing, and the process of adaptation from oral knowledge to text.

**Method.** The Middle English manuscripts are described and compared to the larger corpus of German, Italian and French manuscript instruction in personal arms. These texts are also compared to other types of procedural and declarative writing, the debates over the classification of knowledge, and oral and text-based instruction such as recipe literature and dance notation.

**Conclusions.** Outside the general subject matter of the use of arms, the Middle English fight-texts have little in common with their continental counterparts. This is due to the particular circumstances that determined how authors in fifteenth-century England approached procedural knowledge. The Middle English texts bear a strong similarity to contemporary English texts of dance and recipe literature. Comparison shows that the German and Italian fight-texts were influenced by different genres. This shows that the Middle English authors chose to adapt their oral knowledge to text for different reasons and from different points of reference than others at the same time.

## Acknowledgements

Most students approaching the end of a long project can be forgiven for forgetting the many favours provided by teachers, colleagues, friends, and loved ones. Would Dr. Bloggins be happy to read his name in these acknowledgements or would he rather not be reminded of the association? That sense of caution goes only so far and hides my genuine gratitude. Names must be named. This is the only way to attempt to repay the many debts a student collects over the course of his program.

My supervisor, Dr. Sharon Wright, has been the soul of kindness over the course of my undergraduate and graduate studies. Her understanding and honesty have been invaluable in this work and in general. The same can be said for Dr. Frank Klaassen, whose interest in this odd-ball topic helped convince me that it was worth the effort of a dissertation. Thanks also to Dr. John McCannon for his assistance on my thesis committee. The staff of the History Department, Department Secretary Nadine Penner, and the head of Graduate Studies, Dr. Geoff Cunfer, are deserving of special thanks as well. Thanks also to Dr. Richard Harris, who asked me once if I had considered an academic career. I had to consider the question with some care. I guess I decided to give it a shot. This thesis has far fewer comma splices and other elementary errors of grammar thanks to Aydon Charlton and his sharp eyes.

Dr. Yin Liu, who acted as the external examiner on this thesis made important and constructive contributions to this final text and her meticulous attention to detail and genuine interest in this topic have been invaluable.

I must also thank the Inter-Library Loans department of the University of Saskatchewan Library for their diligence in tracking down a staggering amount of material from a bewildering variety of locations in half a dozen languages. Special thanks to the Department of Manuscripts and Reproduction Services at the British Library, London, who provided me with the essential scans of the relevant manuscripts and granted access to my subject material in December 2010 and 2011. This research was assisted by a travel grant from the University of Saskatchewan Department of History and the College of Graduate Studies. My studies were also generously assisted by a Graduate Teaching Fellowship from St. Thomas More College and a Teaching Assistantship from the Department of History.

For all the contributions of the above, none can compete with the constant and unrelenting support, encouragement, critical eye, and ruthless copy-editing of my partner, Zena Charowsky. Zena can, and should, have her share of credit for this work, and for just about everything good and worthy that my name has been associated with since about 1995.

James Hester, now curator of arms and armour at Her Majesties Tower of London, paid me the genuine compliment of expressing his surprise, after hearing my presentation of some of the preliminary work on the Titus manuscript, that I actually had 18 minutes worth of content about 22 lines of text.<sup>1</sup> I have now produced a thesis of several thousand words, on just over 400 lines of text, and I hope that I have maintained a healthy ratio of quality to quantity.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark R. Geldof, "Perfect Practice Makes Perfect: Drills for the English Great Sword in Cotton Titus A.xv" (presented at the 45th International Congress on Medieval Studies, University of Western Michigan, 2010).

## **Dedication**

For Dad, who didn't get to see the end of this work, but knew his son had finally found something he loved, was good at, and would make an honest living.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Permission to use	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: <i>The fyrste pleyng &amp; begynyng</i> : The manuscripts, historiography, and methodology	6
Chapter 2: <i>than þe chace</i> : Fight-text readers, text strategies, mnemonics, and some German red herrings	31
Chapter 3: <i>and be att yowr stoppe</i> : English dance choreography, and shared vocabularies	57
Conclusion	71
The Apparatus	76
Appendix A	77
Appendix B	85
Appendix C	86
Bibliography	93

## Introduction

This thesis examines three late Middle English manuscripts, produced between the early fifteenth and the mid-sixteenth centuries, each containing instruction in the use of personal arms. These are the only English manuscripts of this kind from the late medieval period. This thesis will place the texts within the broader context of instruction in mechanical sciences, arts and crafts, dance, music, and forms of procedural knowledge. It will also explain why these texts look the way they do, and in so doing, help us understand how the special skills of personal combat were understood as varieties of knowledge and as text.

The few studies of manuscript fight-texts, published in the nineteenth and twentieth century, focus on relationships with modern fencing or in their artistic content, rather than studying the texts as evidence of medieval and early-modern perspectives on knowledge, the place of martial skill in society, or the special challenges for writers tasked with the transmission of complex physical action. Prior to the late sixteenth century, there was no conversation about the role of martial knowledge. Debates that broached martial matters formed part of the literature on prowess — the moral value of acts of martial skill — and did not discuss the acquisition or transmission of the skill itself. Humanism helped change the classifications of knowledge for elite readers, and by the fifteenth century writers began to discuss the place of martial knowledge in a way that separated it from the discussion of prowess. Baldesar Castiglione and Roger Ascham produced works that reflected this new attitude and further influenced an English audience. This shift in classifications of knowledge also changed how technical and procedural writing was produced.<sup>1</sup> The Middle English texts preserve the earliest approach to martial

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<sup>1</sup> The literature on elite behaviour and values changed significantly in the late fifteenth century. The focus moved from the value of martial prowess to the potential for such prowess. The acquisition of skill and ability was a

knowledge, and were produced before Humanist ideas began to change the style and function of technical and procedural writing. Compared to contemporary fight-texts in German, Italian, and French, these three Middle English texts differ further in style and presentation, a difference of significance in the study of martial knowledge and elite culture.

Fight-texts in general, and these Middle English texts in particular, have received little critical attention from scholars. Most studies focus on re-constructing the techniques of swordsmanship, rather than questions of textual transmission or the role of technical and instructional writing on the development of elite ideas about skilled violence.<sup>2</sup> These texts are more than just records of medieval fighting technique; they are "contextualizable and contextualizing artifacts, worthy of investigation in their own right."<sup>3</sup> The evidence they provide for the approach to communicating specialized knowledge helps us understand how a previously oral system of knowledge was adapted to an audience increasingly interested in reading and learning from text. It also shows the variety of approaches to authorial adaptation and how the genre of martial instruction was dependent on many factors that were both practical and theoretical, both parochial and cross-cultural.

Middle English fight-texts developed along different lines than fight-texts in Germany, Italy, and France. The important separation was not in their martial content but the approach to

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more prominent factor than the actual use of that skill. See a discussion of this trend by P. Selwyn and D. Selwyn, "The Profession of a Gentleman: Books for the Gentry and the Nobility (c. 1560 to 1640)," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain and Ireland: Volume 1*, ed. Elisabeth Leadholm-Green and Teresa Webber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 489-519. Representative texts include Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. George Bull (New York: Penguin, 1976), Roger Ascham, *Toxophilus the schole of shootinge contayned in tvvo bookes. To all gentlemen and yomen of Englande, pleasaunte for theyr pastyme to rede, and profitable for theyr use to folow, both in war and peace[...]*, (London: Edward Whitechurch, 1545).

<sup>2</sup> The best recent study of these texts, and the history of scholarly and popular interest in them, is Sydney Anglo, *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe* (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Charles F. Briggs, "Literacy, Reading, and Writing in the Medieval West," *Journal of Medieval History* 26, no. 4 (2000), 398.



instructing complex procedural knowledge. There were a variety of approaches for presenting complex procedural knowledge in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the English writers of these texts chose an approach very different than that used by others tasked with the same problem. In some ways the English fight-texts employ strategies similar to those used in texts of alchemy, medicine, the mechanical sciences, artistic and commercial crafts, dance, and music but they share few similarities with other works on martial knowledge such as manuals of strategy, battle tactics, and the command of armies and fighting men. In fact, the English fight-texts are entirely different from the continental counterparts and this suggests they are the product of unique English conditions.

To place these manuscripts in context this thesis will draw from studies of secular and vernacular works of instruction in the late medieval period. Interest has grown in recent years in the role of medieval and early modern writing and printing on the history of science and technology. William Eamon and Pamela Long have demonstrated how the classification of knowledge, and the value of reason and experience created divisions between physical and intellectual activity which shaped text strategies in science, technology, and the mechanical arts.<sup>4</sup> Similar influences are recognized by recent studies of occult and esoteric literature, business and commercial writing, technical and mechanical arts, as well as instructional writing in music and dance.<sup>5</sup> Questions about the development of textuality in late medieval Europe, discussed by

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<sup>4</sup> Important studies in this field include William Eamon, "Arcana Disclosed: the Advent of Printing, the Books of Secrets Tradition and the Development of Experimental Science in the Sixteenth Century," *History of Science* 22 (1984): 111-150, and *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). For material more focused on technical and craft writing see Pamela O. Long, *Openness, Secrecy, Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> Influential studies on magic and the occult, relevant to the present study, include Claire Fanger, ed. *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic* (University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), Benedek Láng, *Unlocked Books: Manuscripts of Learned Magic in the Medieval Libraries of*

literary scholars are also relevant in this study and help guide the following analysis of the three fight-texts.<sup>6</sup>

The first chapter of this thesis provides the historiographical background to the study of medieval and early modern fight-texts, particularly the Middle English manuscripts. It also discusses related research on technical literature, studies of medieval dance and music instruction, and the current theoretical basis for analysis of text production and use. Most importantly, it introduces, and briefly describes, the three Middle English texts that are the focus of this thesis.

The second chapter will discuss the various features of the Middle English texts and compares them to other works on martial skill. Comparisons with the Continental fight-texts suggest that there are few, if any, connections between their pedagogical strategies and authorial influences within the genre. The Middle English texts are also compared to other texts of technical instruction, and the debates over the classification of knowledge and how that debate affected scribal and authorial strategies. Finally, the influence of these debates, on the production of technical writing and the adaptation of oral knowledge to the medium of text, is briefly discussed.

The last chapter makes the argument that the Middle English texts relate most closely to

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*Central Europe* (University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), and Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> The most relevant studies of dance include Jennifer Nevile, *The Eloquent Body: Dance and Humanist Culture in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 2004), "Dance Performance in the Late Middle Ages: A Contested Space," in *Visualizing Medieval Performance: Perspectives, Histories, Contexts*, ed. Elina Gertsman (Aldershot, Hants.: Ashgate, 2008), 295-310, John M. Ward, "The Maner of Dauncying," *Early Music* 4, no. 2 (1976): 127-140, David Fallows, "The Gresley Dance Collection, c.1500," *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle*, no. 29 (1996): 1-20, David R. Wilson, "Dancing in the Inns of Court," *Historical Dance* 2, no. 5 (1987): 3-16, and "The Basse Dance c.1445-c.1545," in *Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politick, 1250-1750*, ed. Jennifer Nevile (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 2008), 166-181.

late medieval dance and musical literature, particularly in their use of one particular approach to procedural knowledge and signs of a shared vocabulary. The models that explain the process of adapting oral knowledge to text can only answer a few of our questions. There is a significant role for extra-oral aspects of physical instruction, and this issue is discussed here in greater detail. These connections help us identify the particular needs and interests of English authors and readers, their original approach to procedural instruction, and these earliest of English attempts to record instruction in arms.

### **A note on "fencing" as a historical term**

Most studies of this material, from the nineteenth century to today, refer to these texts as "fencing manuals." As "fencing" is popularly understood to refer to sword fighting, this term misses the many other weapons or forms of combat discussed in the medieval texts. "Fencing" is also closely tied to a modern image of swordsmanship and combat informed by the modern sport. German manuals are more commonly referred to as *Fechtbücher*, plural of *Fechtbuch* or "fight-book," a more inclusive term for any text containing instruction in personal combat, with or without weapons. Throughout this thesis, the terms "fight-text" or "fight-book" will be used to maintain that inclusiveness and to avoid anachronistic baggage.

All translations, unless otherwise indicated otherwise, are mine. Transcriptions of manuscript texts are formatted using the same apparatus as the transcriptions in the appendices, unless they are transcribed from other editions in which case they retain the conventions of their respective editors.

## Chapter 1

### ***The fyrste pleyng & begynnyng: The manuscripts, historiography, and methodology***

The Middle English fight-text is the rarest of subspecies in the larger genre of martial literature. Fight-texts serve to instruct readers in the relatively advanced aspects of armed and unarmed personal combat by means of illustrations and explanatory text, or unillustrated verse or prose. Illustrated fight-books from German sources survive in significant numbers but there are none in English before the late sixteenth century. Unillustrated fight-texts are more scarce, although they represent some of the earliest literature on the subject.<sup>1</sup> Most fight-books were produced in the hope of patronage for elite readers and often appear as single texts decorated and bound as presentation items. Fight-texts are rarely found in compilations or commonplace collections.<sup>2</sup>

The three Middle English fight-texts that have survived are of the unillustrated variety and contain prose and verse instruction on the use of the two-hand sword and the two-hand staff. Produced between 1410 and 1550, these three texts are not exactly contemporaneous, but their content and function as instructional texts is similar enough that it is possible to study them as a

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<sup>1</sup> At present there is no complete census of European manuscript fight-texts but a rough tally based on published hand-lists accounts for about sixty extant manuals focused on instruction in personal arms. See Anglo, *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, and the hand-lists in Hans-Peter Hils, *Meister Johann Liechtenauers Kunst des Langen Schwertes* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985), Heidemarie Bodemer, “Das Fechtbuch: Untersuchungen zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der bildkünstlerischen Darstellung der Fechtkunst in den Fechtbüchern des mediterranen und westeuropäischen Raumes vom Mittelalter bis Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts” (unpublished PhD dissertation, Stuttgart: Universität Stuttgart, 2008). The closest to a comprehensive hand-list of known manuscripts is Rainer Leng, ed., *Katalogue der Deutschsprachigen Illustrierten Handschriften des Mittelalters: Band 4/2, Lieferung 1/2, 38. Fecht- und Ringbücher* (Munich: Kommission für Deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, München, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> The majority of German manuals, and all Italian manuals, are illustrated and dedicated (explicitly or implicitly) to elite readers. See Anglo, *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, 30-34, and the introductory material in Camillo Agrippa, *Fencing: A Renaissance Treatise*, ed. Ken Mondschein (New York: Italica Press, 2008), xliii-l.

single English corpus representing the late-medieval approach to martial instruction. Of these three Middle English texts, only the passages in London, British Library, MS Harley 3542 were known to scholars prior to 2000.<sup>3</sup> Since then the other Middle English texts have appeared online and in print in editions of limited value as sources for a detailed study.

Interest amongst military historians, martial arts enthusiasts and historical re-enactors for these texts has grown considerably in recent years but scholarly interest has grown at a slower pace. Online communities and discussion forums are the domain for the amateur researchers, who, although enthusiastic, often have limited practice or interest in academic methods of transcription and editing. Currently, only one of these Middle English texts has appeared in published critical edition.<sup>4</sup> The physical aspects of these manuscripts are important for the following study as each survival exhibit different codicological details.

### **London, British Library MS Harley 3542 (Harley)<sup>5</sup>**

This is a composite codex of 118 paper leaves (c. 200 x 145 mm) arranged in three parts. The parts are related by subject matter but were brought together by a later owner and are considered separate codicological items.<sup>6</sup> The fight-text appears in part two (ff. 17-94v) from ff.

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<sup>3</sup> Anglo, *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, 121-122.

<sup>4</sup> A diplomatic edition of the Titus fight-text has recently appeared in Mark R. Geldof, “Strokes of ij hand swerde: a Brief Instruction in the Use of Personal Arms,” *Opuscula* 1, no. 2 (2011): 1-9.

<sup>5</sup> The verse portion of the fight-text was first published in Thomas Wright and J. S. Halliwell, eds., *Reliquiae Antiquae: Scraps from Ancient Manuscripts...*, vol. 1 (London: John Russel Smith, 1841), 308-309, from which the majority of the definitions found in the *Oxford English Dictionary* derive. The complete text was transcribed again in Alfred Hutton, *The Sword and the Centuries or Old Sword Play and Old Sword Ways* (London: Grant Richards, 1901), 36-40. A more detailed transcription appears in James Hester, “The Use of the Two Hand Sworde’: The English Fight Manual of MS Harley 3542 (A Critical Edition)” (unpublished MA dissertation, York: University of York, 2006), 18-23. The Hutton transcription appears again (with minor differences due to transcription) in Brandon Heslop and Benjamin Bradak, *Lessons on the English Longsword* (Boulder, CO.: Paladin Press, 2010), 155-204.

<sup>6</sup> The provenance of Harley is incomplete. The earliest owner of the second section of the codex appears to be a Thomas Byaed who added his name and some marginal notes. All three units appear to have come together with

82-85, the fourteenth of fifteen items in this part that otherwise discuss alchemy and medicine. The fight-text itself is divided into three parts: two in prose, and one in verse.<sup>7</sup> It comprises 184 lines of instruction with an average of 28 lines per leaf. The leaves are unlined with only boundary lines, framing the text, in light brown ink.

Most of the alchemical and medical items in the collection are in Latin with occasional verse text in Middle English. All of the material appears to be the work of a single scribe using a late fifteenth-century book hand. The script is fairly formal with few variations from the typical *Anglicana* of the fifteenth century. The text was likely produced no earlier than 1400 and not later than 1450.<sup>8</sup> Interrogation of the text using *The Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* strongly suggests the author of the fight-text was native to Gloucestershire or Worcestershire, based on the spelling of "goede" and "wath" as regional variations in the vocabulary.<sup>9</sup> However,

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the ownership of Samuel Knott, the seventeenth-century rector of Combe-Raleigh, Devon. Knott was an interesting character in his own right: "he was, by the generality of the people, looked upon as a conjurer." See Edmund Calamy and Samuel Palmer, *The Nonconformist's Memorial: Being an Account of the Lives, Sufferings and Printed Works of the Two Thousand Ministers...*, 3 vols. (London: J. Cunder for Button and Son, T. Hurst, 1802), 13. From Knott the MS went to Robert Burscough, whose widow sold several texts to Robert Harley in 1715 from whom it eventually came to the British Museum. This codex, along with other medical collections from the Harley collection, is described by Laura Nuvoloni, "The Harleian Medical Manuscripts," *electronic British Library Journal* art. 7, (2008), 1-20. See also the description of the codex and its history in C. E. Wright, ed., *Fontes Harleiani: A Study of the Sources of the Harleian Collection of Manuscripts Preserved in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1972).

<sup>7</sup> These divisions are indicated by line gaps left by the scribe. Samuel Knott likely added the short titles.

<sup>8</sup> It is not possible to be more precise on the issue of date for the Harley text. There are at least three different watermarks in the collection but none of them may be dated confidently. The most recent work in the collection appears to be a version of John Sawtre's *radix mundi*. Sawtre (or Sawtry) was a Benedictine at the Abbey of Thorney in Cambridgeshire. Sawtre was made an Acolyte in 1381 by the Bishop of Ely and he was alive in 1402 when he resigned as prior of Thorney. Singer ascribes the Sawtre composition to the fourteenth century, see Dorthea Waley Singer, *Catalogue of Latin and Vernacular Alchemical Manuscripts in Great Britain and Ireland*, 3 vols. (Brussels: Maurice Lamertin, 1930), and "Alchemical Writings Attributed to Roger Bacon," *Speculum* 7, no. 1 (1932): 80-86. There is no way to be sure when Sawtre composed his work, although he was likely between 10 and 14 years of age when he was made an Acolyte. Adults did join the clergy and this may have been the case with Sawtre, but it is likely that his *Radix Mundi* was produced either in the last years of the fourteenth century or after he left his post of Prior. For a discussion of the process of minor and major orders and the process of advancement see P. H. Cullum, "Boy / Man into Clerk / Priest: The Making of the Late Medieval Clergy," in *Rites of Passage: Cultures of Transition in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Nicola F. McDonald and W. Mark Ormrod (Woodbridge: Boydell and York Medieval Press, 2004), 51-65.

<sup>9</sup> See the diagnostic text used in *LALME*; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 553, in Angus McIntosh, A

any regional connections derived in this way must be used with caution as *LALME* is only a guide to regional variations and loses its value for the study of texts produced later in the sixteenth century.

There are at least three different stocks of paper represented in the second part of Harley, although none of the watermarks can be confidently identified or dated.<sup>10</sup> Paper was already a popular medium for privately produced works of practical and literary by the early fourteenth century. The Harley collection does not appear to be a commercial product, and was likely produced privately, either by the reader himself or by a scribe working in his household.<sup>11</sup> Orietta Da Rold has argued that the presence of paper in some privately produced collections is evidence of a scribe with clerical or administrative connections, but this only helps identify the original owner in general terms.<sup>12</sup>

The present British Library catalogue description, prepared by Laura Nuvoloni, suggests that the fight-text is a copy and not an original composition, based on the lack of other original compositions in the collection and the possible presence of one or more scribal corrections in the fight-text.<sup>13</sup> No other version of this specific text survives. The fight-instruction is transcribed in

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*Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, 4 vols. (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986). My thanks to Dr. Yin Liu who noticed the regional variation of "wath" and its attribution to Warwickshire.

<sup>10</sup> Gatherings vii<sup>12</sup> and viii<sup>12-2</sup> (ff. 73-94) use the same paper stock with a three lobed mount and cross. This mark does not match any in Briquet or Piccard but it is part of a family of marks used by French and Italian makers throughout the fifteenth century. Piccard 150015 (Udine, 1431) is representative of the style. There are at least three other stocks of paper used in the second section of Harley, but none are clear enough for dating purposes.

<sup>11</sup> The presence of quire numbering and catchwords are the most evidence of commercial book production in late-medieval texts but it largely absent in the Middle English fight-texts. See Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 22-24.

<sup>12</sup> Orietta Da Rold, "Materials," in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 26-27. The history of paper in the production of English manuscripts is still open for debate. See R. J. Lyall, "Materials: The Paper Revolution," in *Book Production and Publication in Britain 1375-1475*, ed. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 11-29.

<sup>13</sup> See Nuvoloni's detailed description of MS Harley 3542 (<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/manuscripts/HITS0001.ASP?VPath=html/74821.htm&Search=3542&Highlight=F>). This description was prepared as part of

## Appendix A.

### London, British Library, MS Cotton Titus A xxv (Titus)<sup>14</sup>

This codex is a composite volume of six separate items dating from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries in 138 leaves of vellum and paper (c. 110 x 200mm) bound as a collection by later owners.<sup>15</sup> All six parts are unrelated codicological items. The Titus codex contains 22 lines of instruction in the use of the sword and the staff on f. 105, which is the final leaf of a twelve-leaf paper gathering (ff. 94-105). This gathering is its own codicological unit and exhibits no connection to the other contents of the codex. The fight-text is arranged to look like verse, complete with marginal brackets, but it is composed in simple prose.

The gathering containing the fight-text is mostly occupied with a set of Latin prophetic verse followed by several unrelated verses in Latin and Middle English.<sup>16</sup> This is all likely the

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Nuvoloni's survey of the medical manuscripts in the Harley collection; "The Harleian Medical Manuscripts." Nuvoloni's contention that the text is a copy is not explained in her description but is often the safest statement on the origin of a text in the absence of explicit authorial claims. The possible scribal corrections in the fight-text appear at line 39, f 82r and the repetition of "wastid" at line 99, f 83v may be a transcription error of the scribe.

<sup>14</sup> A transcription of the text prepared by Dr. Eleonora Durban (*née* Litta) while a graduate student at University College London has circulated online since 2003 ([www.hemac.org/trans/CottonTitus.pdf](http://www.hemac.org/trans/CottonTitus.pdf)). A modified version of Durban's transcription appears in Heslop and Bradak, *Lessons on the English Longsword*, 139-153.

<sup>15</sup> This was likely the work of Sir Robert Cotton's librarians. A study of Cotton's early catalogues and hand-lists suggests that the current codex was arranged before 1631. The present binding is modern, perhaps replacing the original binding provided by Cotton, but re-binding does not appear to have altered its arrangement. For a history of Cotton's library and early finding aids for the collection, see Colin G. C. Tite, *The Early Records of Sir Robert Cotton's Library* (London: The British Library, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> The prophetic verses from ff. 94-104 constitute a previously unidentified copy of John of Bridlington's *Versus prophetales*. The Titus version is similar to the edition in Thomas Wright, ed., *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History Composed During the Period From the Accession of Edw. III to that of Ric. III.*, vol. 1 (London: Longman, Green Longman, and Roberts, 1859). The Titus edition is not mentioned in the major studies of Bridlington by Michael J. Curley, "The Cloak of Anonymity and the Prophecy of John of Bridlington," *Modern Philology* 77, no. 4 (1980): 361-369, or Curley's "Versus prophetales, Prophecía Johannis Bridlingtoniensis (The Prophecy of John of Bridlington): an edition" (PhD Dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1973). This oversight is understandable considering that the previous catalogue descriptions of the Titus codex either omit this particular gathering, as in the 1631-32 catalogue (London, British Library, MS Additional 36682, f. 201 of the second volume) which lists only the Annals of the Monastery of Boyle and no other content. The description of the codex in Thomas Smith, *Catalogus Librorum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Cottoniae...*



work of a single scribe who employs a late fifteenth-century secretary hand. Any attempt to suggest a regional attribution based on variations in the vocabulary are quickly frustrated. The brief nature of the texts and the lack of significant diagnostic variations makes any results less than persuasive.<sup>17</sup> The watermark and hand suggest it was produced between 1450 and 1480.<sup>18</sup> A transcription of the fight-text appears in Appendix B.

### **London, British Library, MS Additional 39564 (Additional)<sup>19</sup>**

This manuscript is a single vellum roll (c. 150 x 613mm), containing a collection of prose lessons for the sword. There are 190 lines of text, broken into 41 lessons, each group of instructions supplied with a short title.<sup>20</sup> The text is written in a late secretary hand with some italic elements. It was likely produced around 1550.

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(Oxford: Thomas Smith, 1696), 125, which acts as the current online description, describes the fourth item in the volume as "versus quidam Latini, exesis et evanescentibus characteribus, in charta," (a certain verse in Latin, of worn and faded characters, on paper). The later catalogue, published as Sam Hooper, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library to which are Added Many Emendations and Additions with an Appendix Containing an Account of the Damage Sustained by the Fire in 1731...* (London: S. Hooper, 1777), is arranged thematically but also omits mention of the Bridlington text and the other contents of the gathering.

<sup>17</sup> The closest geographic match of a linguistic profile from *The Linguistic Atlas* is item 1358, Edinburgh, West Register House, TD74/88. This is a record of land transfers from around 1391. However, that location is based on one diagnostically significant word and there are no other terms that suggest a norther origin and so an attribution to this region is very weak.

<sup>18</sup> The bull found in the watermark is similar to a family of marks used in German molds, similar to Piccard 85965, and dated to 1431.

<sup>19</sup> There is no critical edition of this text in publication, but a transcription prepared by Russell Mitchel has circulated online for several years (<http://www.thehaca.com/Manuals/MS39564/MS39564.htm>). This edition misses the final three lessons on the dorse as well as the mention of I. Ledall. Mitchel's edition is used in Benjamin Bradak and Brandon Heslop, "A Brief Introduction to the Boon of the English Flourysh," in *Masters of Medieval and Renaissance Martial Arts*, ed. John Clements (Boulder, CO.: Paladin Press, 2008), 197-209, and by the same authors in *Lessons on the English Longsword*, 61-137. The three missed lessons have been transcribed and made available online by Terry Brown, ([www.aaoma.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/correct-version.pdf](http://www.aaoma.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/correct-version.pdf)). The manuscript was recently the subject of a conference paper: Mark R. Geldof, "Amen Quod J Ledall: BL Additional 39564 and Late Medieval English Fight Texts" (presented at the 46th International Congress on Medieval Studies, University of Western Michigan, Kalamazoo MI., 2011).

<sup>20</sup> The 36th lesson, titled "the xvj<sup>th</sup> and þ<sup>e</sup> defense þ<sup>i</sup> noune shalt close yow" reads as though there should be a title at line 160 but there is no evidence that a title was accidentally missed. The title could be referring to two lessons in this passage, the 16th *poyn*te and the separate defence that begins at line 160. Either interpretation works because the numbering remains consistent in the rest of the lessons.

The text appears to be complete. Although some of the lessons have been arranged out of their numerical order this appears to be a deliberate choice of the author or scribe.<sup>21</sup> The original catalogue entry by the British Museum mistakenly states that the last three lessons on the scroll repeat earlier lessons. None of the lessons repeat and this mistake was likely caused by the poor condition of the final 11 lines.<sup>22</sup>

An inscription appears on the dorse after the 23rd lesson: "Amen quod I. Ledall."<sup>23</sup> There are another 18 lessons, followed by "fine." There is no way to know if Ledall was the instructor whose lessons are recorded here, a student who dictated the lessons to a scribe, or the author of an earlier text, of which this is a copy.<sup>24</sup> The family name "Ledall" is not common to any area of the British Isles but it does appear in Lincolnshire, Cumberland, the Scottish borders, and the county of Fife.<sup>25</sup> The inscription splits the scroll into two roughly equal parts. This may indicate that the two halves were copied down on separate occasions or are deliberately divided in this way for pedagogical reasons.

Reverend Alfred Fuller donated the scroll to the British Museum in 1917 but did not

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<sup>21</sup> Most modern editions produced by re-enactors, in online resources, often re-arrange the lessons on the assumption that the original order was a mistake.

<sup>22</sup> *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum in the Years 1916-1920* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1933), 46.

<sup>23</sup> The "I" in the inscription stands for "J," as was the practice at the time.

<sup>24</sup> Scholars tend to accept the "quod amen" formula as an attribution of the text to a speaker or composer, as in B. Kennedy, "Cambridge MS DD 4 24: A Misogynous Scribal Revision of the Wife of Bath's Prologue?" *The Chaucer Review* 30 no. 4, (1996): 343-358.

<sup>25</sup> Most of these occurrences appear in legal records now in the National Archives, Kew. There are records for a Ledall family in Lincoln, National Archives, Public Records Office, STAC 4/4/32, Court of Star Chamber Proceedings, Philip and Mary, and TNA: PRO, WARD 7/22/24, Records of the Court of Wards and Liveries: Inquisitions Post Mortem, and others. The name appears in Cumberland in the Court of Chancery, TNA: PRO C3/118/24, C3/87/68 and others. One Lenerd Ledall appears in a list of "Assyssers for partie of England" as part of Sir Christopher Dacre's mission to Scotland in 1534, J. S. Brewer, R. H. Brodie, and J. Gardiner, eds., *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII: Preserved in the Public Record Office, the British Museum, and Elsewhere*, vol. 7 (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1883), 157, and a John Ledall is mentioned in John M. Leighton and J. Swan, *History of the County of Fife: From the Earliest Period to the Present Time, Volume 3* (Glasgow: Joseph Swan, 1840), 254.

provide provenance.<sup>26</sup> There is little in the text to help determine previous ownership, including linguistic elements. English began to lose much of its regional variations in the sixteenth century and there are few useful clues within this text for making claims as to place of origin.<sup>27</sup>

It is difficult to know if all three of these texts are original compilations or copies of now lost exemplars. None of the three texts repeats content found in the others and there are few corrections or errors suggestive of copying. Few of these are diagnostically significant.<sup>28</sup>

It is curious that each of these texts presents martial instruction in essentially identical ways, each appears in a different physical context. The Harley collection, with its simple decoration and inclusion in a thematically coherent collection, gives the impression that it was collected there deliberately, perhaps by a scribe who was part of the reader's household, by the reader himself. These kinds of carefully produced collections appear in some numbers from the late medieval period and are associated with a broad cross-section of English gentry families.<sup>29</sup> In

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<sup>26</sup> There may be some information in the British Library's corporate archives or in the research material Fuller donated to the Senate Library, University of London.

<sup>27</sup> Bradak and Heslop, working under the impression that the text is a product of the late fifteenth century, suggest it was produced in London, however, their argument is not supported with any specific linguistic evidence and it is debatable whether one could make any confident regional attribution with the material at hand. *Lessons on the English Longsword*, 32.

<sup>28</sup> Additional has a few errors in word order that could be made by mis-reading an exemplar or mis-hearing dictation. Harley has an odd transition between f. 84r to v, but it is not evidence of missing text. Titus contains the term "rabecke" or "rabette" which could be a mis-heard "rabet" which appears several times, with variant spelling, in Additional and only once in Harley. As an indication of just how much trouble these terms are for a reader intent on making sense of them one can look to Heslop and Bradak who, based on the transcription of the word in Titus as "robecke," read the word as "roebuck," and interpret the term as an allegorical title for a guard. This does follow a common taste for metaphorical titles of guards in German and Italian fight-texts: *Lessons on the English Longsword*, 57. However, this is based on a faulty transcription and an unfounded assumption about English naming practice. A brief note in Anglo's "Le Ju de la Hache," 127, suggests that "rabecke" or "rabette," may be borrowed from the French "rabatir" or "rabat" which indicates a parry, a meaning consistent with its context in these fight texts. This is consistent with the English etymology of a term borrowed from Norman French.

<sup>29</sup> See examples of this type of non-commercial text production by household staff or by the gentry readers themselves in Jean-Pascal Puzet, "Book Production Outside Commercial Contexts" in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500* Alexander Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 212-238.

contrast, the Titus manuscript is a much less careful or deliberate collection. The fight-text appears to have been added here simply because the gathering has some blank space in the final two leaves. The Titus text gives the impression that it was temporary, more personal, and less permanent, than Harley or other commonplace collections. The layout of the Additional manuscript as a scroll was certainly deliberate, and the reversal of the text on the dorse, a common style used in legal documents and court records, would have prevented it from being cut and placed in a codex.<sup>30</sup> This layout also suggests that the Additional scribe may have had more experience with legal writing than book production.

### **Historiography**

Medieval manuals on personal arms are part of a larger genre of literature designed to instruct readers in what János Fügedi, and scholars in cognitive theory, call "procedural knowledge."<sup>31</sup> This historiographical survey will cover the studies of fight-texts as well as technical and procedural writing, although they have only recently begun to cross paths in the study of period texts.

The history of martial knowledge and skill in arms is often a companion to histories of elite culture, particularly the cult of chivalry. The value of martial skill in the medieval period manifests — in Richard Kaeuper's evocative words — as the “worship of the demi-god prowess.”<sup>32</sup> Prior to the late sixteenth century, any conversations about martial knowledge

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<sup>30</sup> See a discussion of English legal documentation in Clemens and Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* 250-258

<sup>31</sup> János Fügedi, “Movement Cognition and Dance Notation,” *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 44, no. 3/4 (2003): 394.

<sup>32</sup> Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 130.

revolved around the nature and value of prowess — what one could and should do with martial knowledge. Many period writers gave advice on how to educate the fighting man, but their guides focus on honourable behaviour and the ethics of war and the tournament: they were not practical manuals for learning skills and the martial techniques of a privileged class.<sup>33</sup>

These manuals form part of the larger body of literature on the role of the martial elites in European society, the moral and ethical values of violence, and the place of the knight and the man-at-arms in the medieval world. There was also a substantial body of literature for elites on hunting, arming for tournaments, conducting deeds of arms and other elite martial activity.<sup>34</sup>

Within this genre there is very little discussion of *how* these elites learned their privileged skill, with the rare exception of hunting literature that does often contain more explicit instruction such as dressing game. This avoidance of training and practical education has much to do with a system of values that made prowess the measure of virtue. Learning and training, activities that nobles must have participated in to gain such skill, had no intrinsic value in this system.<sup>35</sup>

Romance literature told its readers that prowess was quality of character, not an acquired skill.<sup>36</sup>

Prowess was the currency of honour; only by performing or exercising martial skill could honour be obtained.

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<sup>33</sup> Good examples of early manuals of knightly behaviour include Geoffroi de Charny, *A Knight's Own Book of Chivalry*, trans. Elspeth Kennedy (Philadelphia PA.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), and Steven Muhlberger and Geoffroi de Charny, *Jousts and Tournaments: Charny and the Rules for Chivalric Sport in Fourteenth Century France* (Union City, CA.: Chivalry Bookshelf, 2004). For a recent survey of this kind of literature see Raluca Radulescu, "Literature," in *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England*, ed. Raluca Radulescu and Alison Truelove (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 100-118.

<sup>34</sup> On hunting literature see Richard Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (Stroud: The History Press, 2011). On tournament literature see Juliet R. V. Barker, *The Tournament in England, 1100-1400* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1986).

<sup>35</sup> The absence of descriptions of training and practice is discussed at length in Sydney Anglo, "How to Win at Tournaments: The Technique of Chivalric Combat," *The Antiquaries Journal* 68, no. 2 (1988): 248-64.

<sup>36</sup> "Actions that were irrelevant to matters of honour... were ignored." Yuval Noah Harari, *The Ultimate Experience: Battlefield Revelations and the Making of Modern War Culture, 1450-2000* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 102.

The acquisition of martial skill and its value as a form of knowledge changed somewhat in the sixteenth century, and it is around this time that texts begin to consider swordsmanship less in terms of virtue and more in terms of gentle courtesy and honour. The vast majority of printed manuals on swordsmanship that appeared in the late sixteenth century focus on the value of training and diligent study.<sup>37</sup> This change was partly a product of authorial interests in self-promotion. Authors of fencing manuals were often instructors themselves, and they found it useful to portray their own teachings as morally and ethically sound. Fight-texts were also a product mediated between the masters, who possessed the special knowledge, and the scribes who adapted that knowledge to text. The students and readers also influenced this process with their own interests and preferences for textual production.

These interactions between keepers of martial knowledge, the authors and scribes involved in textual transmission, and the literate and influential readers form the "discourse community" for fight-texts.<sup>38</sup> The post-medieval discourse community for martial knowledge was steeped in Humanist interests in explaining the "why" as much as the "how" of their practice and this gave rise to an interest in the history of swordsmanship amongst Humanist scholars and fencing masters, but this new historical awareness was distorted by vested interests in regional styles and fashions.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> These trends in fencing manuals and books of courtesy and courtly behaviour are discussed in Sydney Anglo, "How to Kill a Man at Your Ease: Fencing Books and the Duelling Ethic," in *Chivalry in the Renaissance*, ed. Sydney Anglo (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1990), 1-12.

<sup>38</sup> This model for the transmission of text-based knowledge is described in Claire Jones, "Discourse Communities and Medical Texts," in *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English*, ed. Irma Taavitsainen and Päivi Pahta (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 23-36. These studies provide a more inclusive model that better fits the field of martial knowledge than the "textual community" described in B. Stock, "History, Literature, and Medieval Textuality," *Yale French Studies*, no. 70 (1986): 7-17.

<sup>39</sup> See a general summary of Humanist trends in John Hale, *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance* (New York: Atheneum, 1993), 194-215. The specific influence of Humanism on technical writing is explained in Liliane Hilaire-Perez and Catherine Verna, "Dissemination of Technical Knowledge in the Middle Ages and the

The early histories of swordsmanship treated the medieval period as a dark age for skill in arms. With few exceptions, the earliest manuscript material on martial skill was overlooked or deliberately ignored by the first historians of fencing.<sup>40</sup> Fencing histories written in the eighteenth and nineteenth century exhibit a particularly Whiggish view towards the history of personal arms. At this time fencing was considered as a system that evolved over time towards perfection. The only relevant history in this case was that which connected techniques with important masters and schools and with developments towards modern forms of swordsmanship.<sup>41</sup> Even the brief revival in historical fencing, as public performance, was based on post-medieval ideas and sources. The goal was to reconstruct ancestors of sport fencing, not the medieval techniques of elites.<sup>42</sup> A few German scholars, blessed with an abundance of illustrated manuscript manuals, and a different perspective on modern sport fencing, took an academic approach to the history of arms.

Karl Wassmannsdorff, a lecturer in physical education at the university of Heidelberg, wrote some of the first academic texts on the history of martial skill and education.<sup>43</sup>

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Early Modern Era: New Approaches and Methodological Issues,” *Technology and Culture* 47, no. 3 (2006): 536-565, and Elspeth Whitney, *Paradise Restored: the Mechanical Arts from Antiquity Through the Thirteenth Century*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, v. 80, pt. 1 (Philadelphia, PA.: American Philosophical Society, 1990).

<sup>40</sup> The earliest self-consciously historical treatment of martial skill is by Henric Gunterrodt, *De Veris Principiis Artis Dimicatoriae: Tractatus Breivus* (Wittenburg: Matthaues Welack, 1549), a Latin text written in hopes of patronage. A surviving manuscript edition contains illustrations from fight-texts that Gunterrodt consulted for the print edition (Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, C 15). Many Early-Modern fencing instructors added brief historical discussions to their manuals more out of habit than from scholarly interest: see Anglo, *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, 91-94.

<sup>41</sup> Anglo, *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, 2-4.

<sup>42</sup> This period is dominated by the English authors Egerton Castle (1858-1920), Alfred Hutton, (1839-1910), Carl Thimm, and Richard Burton (1821-1890). Thimm gives an idea of the approach to this material in the introduction to *A Complete Bibliography of Fencing and Duelling as Practiced by all European Nations from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: J. Lane, 1896), vii-xii.

<sup>43</sup> Wassmannsdorff (1821-1906) was educated in philology and physical education at Lübeck and Basil and spent most of his career at Heidelberg. “Waßmannsdorf, Karl Wilhelm Friedrich,” *Meyers Großes Konversations-Lexikon* (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1909), 427.

Wassmannsdorff's interest was in pedagogy and he had little interest in the genealogies of martial technique. His work represents some of the earliest detailed study of medieval and early-modern German fight-instructors and their schools.<sup>44</sup> Wassmannsdorff's academic approach set his work apart from the Italian, French, and English contemporaries, which were written by fencers who fancied themselves historians and antiquarians. Of greater value for modern scholars was Wassmannsdorff's collaboration with Gustav Hergsell (or Hergesell) in producing facsimile editions of fifteenth-century manuals attributed to the *fechtmeister* Hans Talhoffer.<sup>45</sup>

Wassmannsdorff's contemporaries, particularly English writers, remained oblivious — intentionally or otherwise — to the historical value of these texts. Egerton Castle, one of the most widely read and influential English fencing historians of the period, voiced the opinion shared by most of his contemporaries that these medieval texts should be ignored. Castle opined that it was only the advent of gunpowder that led to the development of a "definite system of swordsmanship"; armour and chivalry "never had anything but a retarding effect on the science of fence."<sup>46</sup> This remained the orthodox position for historical treatments of martial skill well into

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<sup>44</sup> Wassmannsdorff's most important works include a study of the first German guilds of swordsmen; *Sechs Fechtschulen der Marxbrüder und Federfechter aus den Jahren 1573 bis 1614* (Heidelberg: Karl Groos, 1870), and a study of Albrecht Dürer's illustrations in a fight-text; Albrecht Dürer, *Die Ringkunst des deutschen mittelalters unit 119 ringerpaaren*, ed. Karl Wassmannsdorff (Leipzig: M. G. Briber, 1870).

<sup>45</sup> Talhoffer (fl. 1443-1467) produced at least four manuals during his life-time that were subsequently copied by later scribes and artists in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. Hergsell produced facsimiles of four of Talhoffer's manuals with editorial contributions from Wassmannsdorff: Hans Talhoffer, *Talhoffers Fechtbuch aus dem Jahre 1467*, ed. Gustav Hergsell. (Prague: Ottomar Beyer, 1887); *Fechtbuch (Gothaer Codex) aus dem Jahre 1443*, ed. Gustav Hergsell (Prague: Ottomar Beyer, 1889); and *Fechtbuch (Ambraser Codex) aus dem Jahre 1459*, ed. Gustav Hergsell (Prague: Ottomar Beyer, 1889). For a brief biographical sketch of Talhoffer see Leng, *Katalogue der Deutschsprachigen Illustrierten Handschriften*, 35-36.

<sup>46</sup> Egerton Castle, *Schools and Masters of Fence, from the Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century; with a Sketch of the Development of the Art of Fencing with the Rapier and the Small Sword, and a Bibliography of the Fencing Art During that Period* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1885), 13, 15. This was Castle's only book-length study of fencing but his status as an accomplished amateur fencer and his association with other notable historical fencers of the time gave his book special status and considerable influence. Castle moved away from historical studies and spent most of his later career as a prolific novelist, with his wife as co-author: "Mr. Egerton Castle: Novelist and Swordsman," *The Times of London*, September 18, 1920, sec. Obituaries.



the 1970s.<sup>47</sup>

Thankfully, German scholars continued to build on the work of Wassmannsdorff, and various studies expanded knowledge of German fight-texts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, particularly the history of martial pedagogy and the social environment of German guilds of swordsmen.<sup>48</sup> Other German scholars, appreciative of the historical value of fight-texts, incorporated them into early studies of German technical writing such as the *kunst* and *fachliterature* (art and manufacture literature).<sup>49</sup> English scholarship renewed its interest in these texts of martial culture only in the 1980s, still unaware of the steady progress of German scholars.

The history of martial skill has benefited from recent changes in the study of cultural and material history, beginning in the 1980s. This change in historical methodology coincided with the growth of communities of historical re-enactors and experimental archaeologists interested in material culture and historical performance.<sup>50</sup> However, most of the work on fight-texts and the

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<sup>47</sup> Castle's influence is evident in many twentieth-century works on swordsmanship from J. D. Aylward, *The English Master of Arms from the Twelfth to the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1956), to Richard Cohen, *By The Sword: A History of Gladiators, Musketeers, Samurai, Swashbucklers, and Olympic Champions* (New York: Modern Library, 2003). For a brief summary of Castle, Hutton, and Cyril Matthey's influence on the late Victorian fencing revival, see Sydney Anglo, "Fencing or Fighting? George Silver, Cyril Matthey, and the *Infantry Sword Exercise of 1895: Rediscovering an Elizabethan Swordsman in Late Victorian England*" in *Masters of Medieval and Renaissance Martial Arts: Rediscovering the Western Combat Heritage*, eds. John Clements and Jeffrey Hull (Boulder, CO.: Paladin, 2008):375-388.

<sup>48</sup> Important studies following Wassmannsdorff include Karl E. Lochner, *Waffenkunde für Sportfechter un Waffenliebhaber* (Vienna: Isda and Brodmann, 1960); Martin Wierschin, *Meister Johann Liechtenauers Kunst des Fechtens* (Munich: C. H. Bech'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965); and Hellmuth Helwig, "Die Deutschen Fechtbücher: Eine Bibliographische Übersicht," *Borsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel* 12, no. 55 (1966): 1407-1416.

<sup>49</sup> See the studies of German technical writing in Gerhard Eis, *Mittelalterliche Fachliterature*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Durchges. Aulf., 1967), and more focused studies on procedural and physical instruction in by Jan-Dirk Müller, "Bild - Vers - Prosa-Kommentar am Beispiel von Fechtbüchern. Probleme der Verschriftlichung einer schriftlosen Praxis," in *Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit im Mittelalter*, ed. Hagen Keller, vol. 65 (München, 1992), 251-282.

<sup>50</sup> The cultural turn refers to post-modern methodologies in the humanities, particularly in history and literature: see Fredric Jameson, ed., *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998* (London: Verso, 1998). The largest historically themed group of enthusiasts and experimenters is the Society for Creative Anachronism, founded in Berkeley, California in 1966. Most modern historical combat groups originate from this

history of martial skill increasingly took place outside the academy, with the notable exception of Sydney Anglo's work and a small number of other writers interested in elite culture, violence and military history.<sup>51</sup>

This wave of popular interest martial arts practitioners and historical re-creationists has been a mixed blessing for scholars. The internet is a jungle of forums and interest groups dedicated to the topic and it has produced a bewildering variety of work of debatable quality and utility.<sup>52</sup> The same can be said with the corresponding increase in print publications aimed at this audience of practitioners and general readers.<sup>53</sup> One byproduct of all this energy was the creation of a new wave of facsimiles and published transcriptions of manuscript material that was previously out of print or difficult to access.<sup>54</sup> Much of this material comes from non-academic

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organization or drew most of their members and methods from it: see Michael C. Cramer, *Medieval Fantasy as Performance: The Society for Creative Anachronism and the Current Middle Ages* (Lanham, ML.: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 95-99.

<sup>51</sup> In addition to the previously mentioned works by Sydney Anglo one can add "The Man Who Taught Leonardo Darts: Pietro Monte and His 'Lost' Fencing Book," *Antiquaries Journal* 69, no. 2 (1989): 261-78, "Le Jeu de la Hache: A Fifteenth-Century Treatise on the Technique of Chivalric Axe Combat," *Archaeologia* 109 (1991): 113-128. Other important studies of the social aspects of privileged violence published during this period include J. R. Hale, *Renaissance War Studies* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983); V. G. Kiernan, *The Duel in European History: Honour and the Reign of Aristocracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

<sup>52</sup> Representative groups with a stronger connection to modern martial arts include the The Association of Renaissance Martial Arts (<http://www.thearma.org/>) and the Historical European Martial Arts Coalition (<http://www.hemac.org/php/main.php>).

<sup>53</sup> Titles that represent the variety of work in this period include John Clements, *Renaissance Swordsmanship: The Illustrated Use of Rapiers and Cut-and-Thrust Swords* (Boulder, CO.: Paladin Press, 1997); John Clements, *Renaissance Swordsmanship: the Illustrated Use of Rapiers and Cut-and-Thrust Swords* (Boulder, CO.: Paladin Press, 1997); Terry Brown, *English Martial Arts* (Thetford Forest Park, Norfolk: Anglo-Saxon Books, 1997); and J. Christoph Amberger, *The Secret History of the Sword: Adventures on Ancient Martial Arts* (Orange, CA.: Multi-Media Books, 1998). Perhaps the best example of the range of quality in this area is in the contents of a single text from Paladin, John Clements and Jeffrey Hull, eds. *Masters of Medieval and Renaissance Martial Arts: Rediscovering the Western Combat Heritage* (Boulder, CO.: Paladin, 2008). This collection runs the gamut of quality from essays by Sydney Anglo to contributions by John Clements, who has some of the most creatively wrong citations of manuscript shelf-marks in print.

<sup>54</sup> One of the first facsimiles published for this new audience is based on a Hergsell facsimile: Hans Talhoffer, *Medieval Combat: A Fifteenth-Century Manual of Swordfighting and Close-Quarter Combat*, trans. Mark Rector (London: Greenhill Books, 2000). Rector's text attracted the notice of some academics, who were less than charitable towards his scholarship: see Harald Kleinschmidt, "Reviewed work(s): *Medieval Combat: A Fifteenth-Century Illustrated Manual for Sword-Fighting and Close-Quarter Combat* by Hans Talhoffer; Mark Rector,"

publishers who increasingly specialize in a topic with a steadily growing readership.<sup>55</sup> Brian Price, who was himself a re-enactor and armourer, founded his own publishing company with the mandate to publish facsimiles and interpretations of medieval and early-modern combat manuals by new authors. Gregory Mele, an independent researcher and fencing instructor, started his own publishing company, Freelance Academy Press, with the same goal.<sup>56</sup> Some of these publications must be used with great caution and are, as Frances Yates would say, "unusable by the critical historian" but are still valuable "as a means of leading to original material."<sup>57</sup>

Sydney Anglo's *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe* had the good fortune to appear in 2000 to an eager readership. Anglo's book is in some ways a successor to Castle's but Anglo exhibits a stronger scholarly foundation and has had a far more positive influence on martial scholarship since.<sup>58</sup> Many European libraries and museums have, perhaps unwittingly,

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*Journal of Military History* 66, no. 1 (2002): 193-194.

<sup>55</sup> Quite a few titles dealing with medieval and early-modern martial skill have been published by Paladin Press, based in Boulder CO. Paladin is better known for publishing books for survivalists, war-gamers, and for readers interested in tactical firearms and urban self-defence: (<http://www.paladin-press.com/>).

<sup>56</sup> Price's publishing house, Chivalry Bookshelf, published a single-volume edition of Bengt Thordeman's work on the mass-grave at Wisby, which was in the public domain: Bengt Thordeman, ed., *Armour from the Battle of Wisby, 1361* (Union City, CA.: Chivalry Bookshelf, 2002). Their next title was the transcription, translation, and facsimile of the earliest extant fight text in Europe: Jeffrey L. Forgeng, *The Medieval Art of Swordsmanship: A Facsimile & Translation of Europe's Oldest Personal Combat Treatise, Royal Armouries MS. I.33* (Union City, CA. and Leeds: Chivalry Bookshelf and The Royal Armouries, 2003). So great was the interest in this edition that an interpretation of the techniques was prepared and published in advance of the facsimile: Paul Wagner and Stephen Hand, *Medieval Sword & Shield: The Combat System of Royal Armouries MS I.33* (Union City, CA.: Chivalry Bookshelf, 2003). As of 2009, Chivalry Bookshelf has suspended publication while Price pursues a PhD in history at the University of North Texas. Mele's publishing venture, *Freelance Academy Press* (<http://www.freelanceacademypress.com/>), was motivated by a series of poor business practices that contributed to the decline of Chivalry Bookshelf; see a discussion of the episode at (<http://forums.armourarchive.org/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?t=129990>)

<sup>57</sup> Frances Yates was referring to early material on the Rosicrucian movement in early-modern Europe, but the same

<sup>58</sup> Examples of the new wave of publication in the wake of Anglo's *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, include edited collections of essays published by Chivalry Bookshelf: Stephen Hand, ed., *Spada: Anthology of Swordsmanship in Memory of Ewart Oakeshott* (Union City, CA.: Chivalry Bookshelf, 2002); and Stephen Hand, ed., *Spada 2: Anthology of Swordsmanship* (Highland Village, TX: Chivalry Bookshelf, 2005); and collections from other publishers: Barry Molloy, ed., *The Cutting Edge: Studies in Ancient and Medieval Combat* (Stroud: Tempus, 2007); Fabrice Cognot, ed., *Mâitres & Techniques de Combat: à la Fin du Moyen-Age et au Début de la Renaissance* (Paris: AEDEH, 2006).

contributed to new scholarship by means of large-scale digitization projects that make previously unpublished manuscripts easily available. Digital projects continue despite the risk of unauthorized download and unattributed re-production.<sup>59</sup>

Much of the new scholarship retains a focus on re-construction of technique, rather than questions about the text's composition, ownership and use. These texts remain infrequent subjects of study as material objects or products of intellectual influences, or as records of elite ideas about knowledge.<sup>60</sup> Larger questions about pedagogy and textual strategy appear most often when re-enactors are confronted with fiendishly complex arrangements of instructions which often feature prominently in illustrated manuals. In these cases, the historical and intellectual context of the writer is just as important as the modern researcher's knowledge of martial arts in the process of re-creation. Despite the best efforts of modern readers, some fight-texts frustrate all attempts at interpretation so their value as historical witnesses instead comes from other valuable traits.<sup>61</sup>

Fight-texts may contain very specialized information intended for well informed readers of

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<sup>59</sup> One of the most significant projects is from the Bavarian State Archives: see Manfred Dworschak, "Competition for Google: A German Library for the 21st Century," *Spiegel Online*, 2010, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,676591,00.html>. The Bavarian State Archives has several important manuscript and print texts on personal arms, and since the material has been publicly available in digital format, images of manuscript texts have been used extensively in many online publications by enthusiasts. Images from these texts have appeared in print publications without attribution, or very limited credit, as in Jeffrey Hull, Monika Maziarz, and Grzegorz Zabinski, *Knightly Dueling: The Fighting Arts of German Chivalry* (Boulder, CO.: Paladin Press, 2008).

<sup>60</sup> Recent studies that approach these issues include Ken Mondschein's edition of Camillo Agrippa's fencing treatise cited above.

<sup>61</sup> An example of this complex system in some illustrated manuals was demonstrated in a recent conference paper focusing on an early fifteenth-century Italian manual: Robert Charrette, "Patterns of Remedy in Fiore Dei Liberi's Fior di Battaglia: How Treatise Organization Can Inform Interpretation" (presented at the 45th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo MI, 2010). Another study of Leeds, Royal Armouries, MS I 33 has tried to understand its arrangement by making analogies to Latin grammar and the construction of verbs. It also notes that a series of marginal illustrations in the manuscript may function to assist the reader in this process of arrangement. See a discussion of one example of this complex system in Franck Cinato and André Surprenant, "Luitger par Lui-même? Stratigraphie d'une synthèse Médiévale de L'escrime," in *Maîtres & Techniques de Combat: à la Fin du Moyen-Age et au Début de la Renaissance*, ed. Fabrice Cognot (Paris: AEDEH, 2006), and Franck Cinato and André Surprenant, *Le Livre de L'art du Combat: Liber de Arte Dimicatoria* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2007).

martial skill, but they are also part of a larger family of texts that preserve technical knowledge and physical action.

Non-literary secular writing from the late medieval and early modern periods covers an enormous range of topics, and the study of these texts demonstrates one useful approach to works on martial skill. "How-to" books form a surprisingly large part of secular writing in late-medieval Europe, and they cover almost every imaginable topic of interest, including "gardening, cooking, carving, surveying, carpentry, accounting, animal husbandry, beekeeping, hawking, hunting, and fishing, in addition to a variety of legal, educational, and medical publications"; they enjoyed an equally large and varied readership.<sup>62</sup> In broad terms, these texts function as pragmatic literature, distinct from works of a devotional or literary nature. Technical writing is diverse in literary style and physical presentation, and this variety frustrates more specific classifications.

Elizabeth Tebeaux notes that most studies of technical writing focus on the history and development of scientific instruction "with particular emphasis on rhetoric and style" while missing other aspects of late medieval thought about text production.<sup>63</sup> The history of technical writing is a relatively recent area of scholarly interest but there has been considerable development in the area since the 1980s.

Late Medieval technical writing is usually grouped into studies of specific subjects, or it features in histories of specific disciplines such as engineering, mathematics, or non-literary genres such as business writing.<sup>64</sup> Technical writing or pragmatic writing, like its fight-text

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Elizabeth Tebeaux, "Visual Language: The Development of Format and Page Design in English Renaissance Technical Writing," *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 5 (1991): 246.

<sup>64</sup> These are often studies of the instruction in techniques, instruments and processes, rather than the activity itself. Examples are Carol S. Lipson, "Descriptions and Instructions in Medieval Times: Lessons to be Learnt from Geoffrey Chaucer's Scientific Instruction Manual," *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* 12, no. 3 (1982): 243-256; John Hagge, "The First Technical Writer in English: A Challenge to the Hegemony of Chaucer,"

counterparts, usually appears in studies interested in understanding or reconstructing medieval technique.<sup>65</sup> Some studies have been more sensitive to what these texts can tell modern readers about changing ideas of how the world worked, and how research and enquiry changed over time. Studies of the pedagogy behind technical writing — how authors presented information to educate readers — is less well represented, but Linda Voigt's and Irma Taavitsainen's studies of medical and scientific writing stand out and are particularly useful examples of this approach.<sup>66</sup>

Technical writing in the medieval and early modern period was influenced in its textual style and physical presentation by the contemporary debates on the classification of knowledge. Texts on martial instruction, particularly the physical use of arms, was subject to these same influences. This debate made itself felt on two levels; it effected the way that readers and authors thought about various kinds of knowledge, where it fit in the ordered medieval world, and it influenced how it was valued as information and as moral action. In turn these attitudes influenced the choices made by writers when they came to present this information as text. In the

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*Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* 20, no. 3 (1990): 269-289; Tebeaux, "Visual Language," and "Pillaging the Tombs of Noncanonical Texts: Technical Writing and the Evolution of English Style," *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 18 (2004): 165-197. Other studies of craft knowledge often discuss technical writing, such as Carlo Belfanti, "Guilds, Patents, and the Circulation of Technical Knowledge: Northern Italy during the Early Modern Age," *Technology and Culture* 45, no. 3 (2004): 569-589.

<sup>65</sup> The most wide-ranging studies of technical, scientific, and esoteric writing in medieval and early modern Europe is William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, and "Arcana Disclosed." See also Deborah E Harkness, *The Jewel House: Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). More focused studies of specific technical writing in science and medicine include Lynette Hunter, "Books for Daily Life: Household, Husbandry, Behaviour," in *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain Volume IV: 1557 - 1695*, ed. John Barnard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 514-532, and Irma Taavitsainen, "Middle English Recipes: Genre Characteristics, Text Type Features and Underlying Traditions of Writing," *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 2, no. 1 (2001): 85-113. The most influential general survey of the history of medieval technology and its associated social and literary context is still Lynn White Jr., *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

<sup>66</sup> See Linda Ehrsam Voigts, "Scientific and Medical Books," in *Book Production and Publication in Britain 1375-1475*, ed. J. Griffiths and D. Pearshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 345-402, Taavitsainen, "Middle English Recipes," with Päivi Pahta, "Vernacularisation of Medical Writing in English: A Corpus-Based Study of Scholasticism," *Early Science and Medicine* 3, no. 2 (1998): 157-185, also with Päivi Pahta, eds., *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

medieval period this was most easily recognized in the careful separation of forms of knowledge within structures of classification and in the deliberate segregation of topics based on text strategies. For example, the twelfth century scholar Albertus Magnus wrote extensively on the technical and philosophical aspects of various topics but he was careful to treat each topic with their own appropriate rhetorical and pedagogical style. Early collections of his work also avoided mixing practical with philosophical works in the same volume.<sup>67</sup> Technical writing usually concerns information that can be thought of as "procedural knowledge," such as recipes and craft production. This is distinct from "declarative knowledge," such as theoretical works on engineering, mathematics, alchemy and cosmology.<sup>68</sup> These originate from the classical roots of their subjects and the Aristotelian classifications of knowledge, expanded and elaborated by later medieval writers.<sup>69</sup> By the fifteenth century the segregation of practical knowledge from philosophical works in discreet volumes was less common, and such a practice was never common in medicine, natural sciences, and esoteric topics such as image magic.<sup>70</sup> By the later sixteenth century an English reader could now purchase print collections of Albertus Magnus that freely mixed his philosophical discussions of natural virtues and powers with recipes and fantastic accounts of distant lands.<sup>71</sup> Although the separation of texts by content became less

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<sup>67</sup> See Whitney, 137-139.

<sup>68</sup> This division of pragmatic instruction is borrowed from Fügedi, 394, where he adapts the concept to the study of cognition and movement.

<sup>69</sup> This concern for order permeated all aspects of intellectual thought in overt and covert ways. A good study of this issue and print culture is David McKitterick's *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order 1450-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>70</sup> Medical, scientific and occult writing is the subject of substantial scholarship that makes this lack of segregation clear. Specific examples include works on image and ritual magic such as the *Picatrix* and the *Sworn Book of Honorius*. See Frank Klaassen, "English Manuscripts of Magic: 1300-1500, a Preliminary Survey," in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, ed. Claire Fanger (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 3-31.

<sup>71</sup> Books of secrets were one of the early and highly successful ventures of the print age. See Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*. On Albertus Magnus and the mixed collections of his material see Michael R. Best and Frank H. Brightman, eds., *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus of the Virtues of Herbs, Stones and Certain*

prevalent over time the pedagogical divisions, based on different values ascribed to practical and philosophical knowledge, continued to influence text strategies.<sup>72</sup>

Conversations about the place of the practical and mechanical arts affected how information was presented in text, the strategies used for instructions, and how readers understood and valued such knowledge. Medieval and early-modern readers of technical literature were part of the same learned audience that read and collected texts on the use of personal arms and were not immune to these influences. At its most simple, the classical divisions of knowledge diverged on the choice of method to obtain knowledge. Knowledge (*scientia*) gained through reason (*via rationis*) formed the subject of philosophical and theoretical writing. Knowledge gained by experience (*via experimentalis*) included the technical and practical topics of production, the manipulation of nature, and the physical world. Rational knowledge was considered inherently superior to knowledge gained by experience.<sup>73</sup> This was a division between the theoretical and the applied sciences, the philosophical and the practical.<sup>74</sup> William Eamon, Elspeth Whitney, Pamela Long and George Ovitt Jr. all discuss the unstable nature of these divisions and the various arguments over what was or was not *experimenta* or *scientia*, what

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*Beasts, Also A Book of the Marvels of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

<sup>72</sup> This movement from the pragmatic texts focused on procedural instruction to mixed texts with greater emphasis on theoretical and conceptual content is explained in Elizabeth Tebeaux, "Books of Secrets - Authors and Their Perception of Audience in Procedure Writing of the English Renaissance," *Issues in Writing* 3, no. 1 (1990): 41-67. William Eamon is careful to point out that all variations on this content were contemporary in the fifteenth and sixteenth century but the purely theoretical texts remained the domain of elite readers while the more pragmatic material could be found in the collections of almost any literate reader: *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, particularly 93-132.

<sup>73</sup> This is the simplest description of the divisions and later medieval writers elaborated on this at length in order to account for new areas of study and more subtle aspects of sensory or rational understanding. See the excellent summary of this topic in Eamon, *Science and Secrets of Nature*, 38-90. For the implications of this medieval debate on the progress of European thought see Arthur Koestler, *The Sleepwalkers: A History of Man's Changing Vision of the Universe* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1959), 87-117.

<sup>74</sup> This division of knowledge is explained nicely by Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, 57-58.



constituted *techné* (the manipulation of matter) and *ars* (artistic production and craft).<sup>75</sup> These arguments were varied and subtle, but the basic divisions remained until the re-evaluation of knowledge in the wake of Humanism.<sup>76</sup> Dance and music feature in these debates, mostly over their moral value, but the debate also influenced authorial choices for text strategy and scribal choices over physical presentation, permanence and material value. Dance has the added complication that it was primarily concerned with teaching movement (*praxis*), which forms part of the broader subject of technical knowledge and has a direct bearing on the production of fight-texts.

Unfortunately, martial skill does not appear in the contemporary debates on the classification of knowledge. Some martial topics, such as armour, siege-craft, and military engineering (all broadly categorized as *armatura*) appear in some medieval classifications of knowledge by Hugh of St. Victor and others but the use of personal arms, as a form of knowledge, is absent.<sup>77</sup> We can gain some idea of how writers and readers of the Middle English fight-texts thought about this knowledge by analyzing how the texts were produced and how they resemble or differ from other kinds of practical writing in the fifteenth and sixteenth century.

Past and recent scholarship on fight-texts gives little solid ground for a study of the Middle English fight-texts, but scholarship on technical and practical writing from the late

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<sup>75</sup> See discussions of this issue in Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, 38-90, Long, *Openness, Secrecy, Authorship*, 16-45, and George Ovitt Jr., "The Status of the Mechanical Arts in Medieval Classifications of Learning," *Viator* 14, no. 14 (1983): 89-105. An excellent example of this division in practice, and its effects on the content and style in text compilations is the study of herbal recipe collections in Martii Mäkinen, "Herbal Recipes and Recipes in Herbals - Intertextuality in Early English Medical Writing" in *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English*, eds. Irma Taavitsainen and Päivi Pahta (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 144-173.

<sup>76</sup> A more detailed discussion of this issue is in Whitney, 57-74, and James A. Weisheipl, "Classification of the Sciences in Medieval Thought," *Mediaeval Studies* 27 (1965): 54-90.

<sup>77</sup> This discussion of military arts appears in Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon*. For this and other discussions of military technology in classifications of knowledge see Whitney, 83-86, 115-122.

medieval and early modern period is encouraging for a stable historical approach could apply here. This approach will be supplemented by a methodology derived from studies of medieval textuality and the transition from oral to text systems of knowledge.

### **Methodology**

Most medieval technical writing, particularly vernacular works on craft production and works on mechanical and engineering processes, are products of the late Middle Ages. Literacy may have been limited in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries but the new authors of technical treatises did not need to re-invent the wheel.<sup>78</sup> Recent studies of late medieval literature shows that authors were quick to adapt existing strategies to create texts that contained knowledge previously only shared orally. This was the case for the news shop manuals and texts on commercial craft production that appeared in great numbers in Germany during the sixteenth century. The authors of these new texts based both their pedagogical approach as well as the physical layout of their texts on existing models. These models were mostly — but not exclusively — other practical and philosophical writing. Scholars may still debate the reasons why these texts began to appear when they did but there is less debate as to why they took their specific form. Tracing the various influences on authors is not easy, as Tim Machan writes, "The cultural shift from orality to literacy is not a discrete and decisive shift but rather a continuum of change."<sup>79</sup>

The process of adapting oral knowledge to text is the focus of a study by Jesse M.

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<sup>78</sup> Adrian Johns, "Science and the Book," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in England Volume IV*, ed. Donald Francis McKenzie, David McKitterick, and I. R. Willison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 274-303.

<sup>79</sup> Tim William Machan, "Editing, Orality, and Late Middle English Texts," in *Vox Intexta: Orality and Textuality in the Middle Ages*, ed. A. N. Doane and Carol Braun Pasternack (Madison, WI.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 229. See also the study of oral influences on text production in John Dagenais, "That Bothersome Residue: Toward a Theory of the Physical Text," in *Vox Intexta*, 246-259.

Gellrich, who wrote that the process of late-blooming textuality required authors to develop their own "*vox literata*, the 'lettered voice'" for their material.<sup>80</sup> Gellrich knows that the idea that "[w]riting is speech written down" is too simple to explain why and how oral knowledge was turned into text.<sup>81</sup> Gellrich describes a model for this process of adaptation that is also informed by anthropological studies of literacy and orality.<sup>82</sup> Manuscripts on technical topics preserve artifacts of this process, particularly where the new knowledge overlaps with established categories. However, authors were not bound to adapt strategies exclusively from other practical writing but could choose from a great variety of literary forms. As Machan writes, "we can at best establish only the probability of the influence of orality, not the certainty."<sup>83</sup> The Middle English fight-texts preserve evidence of those influences and point to other textual models and residual oral strategies. There is one added complication that the model, as described by Machan and Gellrich, fails to accommodate. Most studies of orality and literacy concern the adaptation of speech to text, they do not account for the extra-oral aspects of physical instruction. Personal combat, like dance, is a physical performance and the aural aspect of instruction — demonstration, mimicry, improvisation — are not strictly oral forms of communication or pedagogy. This extra hurdle for those moving their instruction towards the medium of text is much more difficult to account for. Studies of dance instruction, an area that has enjoyed more scholarly attention than fight-texts, help us here, as do studies of physical cognition and training. We must be careful venturing too far into other disciplines and at this stage perhaps only cautious

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<sup>80</sup> Jesse M. Gellrich, *Discourse and Dominion in the Fourteenth Century: Oral Contexts of Writing in Philosophy, Politics, and Poetry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 13. Gellrich is borrowing the term *vox literata* from the early medieval grammarian Priscian who described a similar process of text production.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Walter J. Ong is important for Gellrich's model, as are other anthropological studies of literacy. A recent edition is Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>83</sup> Machan, 230.

conclusions can be drawn as regards these extra-oral features of fight-texts. "Let us proceed slowly," advises Valentin Groebner, who began his study of medieval violence with the wise words of anthropologist Michael Taussig: "the shortest way between two points [...] is the long way around, tracing the edge sideways like the crab scuttling."<sup>84</sup> Out of necessity this study must take a similarly circuitous path.

In the following chapter this methodology will be applied in two stages. The first step is to identify the text strategies used in the fight-texts and compare them to other textual sources which pre-date the fight-texts or are contemporary with their creation. This will help identify the existing textual models that influenced the English writers. None of these texts were produced entirely independently of other textual influences and the choice of adaptive strategies used by the early writers is important in understanding how they thought of their knowledge and how they intended to communicate that knowledge by using text. William Eamon's study of late medieval and early modern books of secrets and other practical writing suggests that their development was largely uniform across Europe. These English texts suggest that this was not the case, that English writers operated in some isolation from their German, French and Italian counterparts before the sixteenth century.

The second step is to look for oral artifacts in the Middle English texts. This will involve a study of the various mnemonic techniques. Looking at mnemonics is also important in comparing the Middle English strategies with German and Italian fight-texts. Chapter two also has an important digression on the brief verse passage in the Harley manuscript, as an important key in understanding the unique nature of the English corpus of fight instruction.

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<sup>84</sup> Valentin Groebner, *Defaced: the Visual Culture of Violence in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 35.

## Chapter 2

### ***Than þe chace: Fight-text readers, text strategies, mnemonics, and some German red herrings***

Studies of fight-texts usually treat them as part of a "homogeneous corpus," despite the considerable variety in their form, function and content.<sup>1</sup> Jan-Dirk Müller, in his study of German technical writing, gave some idea of the diversity of German *Fechtbücher*, which could be found "together with astrological tables, military technology, or civil-ethics." Topics discussed were equally varied, and embraced jurisprudence, traditional knowledge, and gnomic proverbs.<sup>2</sup> The pedagogical approach to instruction used many strategies such as prose and verse text, illustrations with descriptions, and concentrated rules in *Merkversen*, or mark-verse and commentaries.<sup>3</sup> Although most studies of fight-texts focus on the function of illustrations as instruction composers of fight-books used text in equally creative and informative ways.<sup>4</sup>

Most fight-texts use the vernacular when composing prose. Only two manuals, out of the more than sixty extant, use Latin as the primary language of instruction.<sup>5</sup> Fight-texts also exhibit strong regional variations based on reader tastes and authorial goals. The Italian manuals produced between 1410 and 1500 — all illustrated manuals dedicated to elite patrons — arrange

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<sup>1</sup> Müller, 251.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Müller lists the subjects as "mantischen, astrologischen, militärtechnischen oder standesethischen Texten" and "Verhaltenslehren, juristische Ausführungen, historische Überlieferungen, selbst für Sprichwortwissen,"

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. "Es gibt fortlaufend gereimte Verslehren, ein in Merkversen Konzentriertes Regelwissen, Prosaauslegungen der Verslehren, Prosabeschreibungen von Bewegungsabläufen, registerartig zusammengestellte Termini und Kunstregeln, nicht zuletzt Bildfolgen mit und ohne Beischriften."

<sup>4</sup> The two most detailed studies of fight-texts in recent years share this focus: Anglo, *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*; and Bodemer, "Das Fechtbuch."

<sup>5</sup> Leeds, Tower Armouries, MS I 33 uses Latin but adapts German terms where there are no Latin equivalents. One of Fiore dei Liberi's manuals, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Mss Latin 11269, is composed entirely in Latin.

their content differently than German manuals. Italian illustrators appear to have been influenced by styles from astrological medical manuals and several Italian texts begin with a variation on the "zodiac man." In fight-texts the human figure is shown in relation to various natural powers that govern the art of personal defence.<sup>6</sup> German manuals do not use a zodiac man but some feature an allegorical figure in the form of a hybrid beast that represents the various zoomorphic values such as a hawk's eyesight and a deer's agility, relevant to martial skill.<sup>7</sup> Of the French fight-texts, only one dates from the fifteenth century and it gives its instruction in prose. large decorative capitals were left unfinished and this suggests the text was not purely functional or temporary but was intended for an elite reader as a patronage gift or was specially commissioned. piece. The French manual also employs a text strategy different from that of German, Italian and Middle English contemporaries.<sup>8</sup>

While the utility of fight-texts as teaching material is certainly open to debate, something that Sydney Anglo studies at length, differences amongst fight-texts are not superficial, they show that there was no fixed approach to presenting this kind of information in the fifteenth century. Studying these texts from the perspective of technical and procedural writing makes it possible to identify and explain these differences. This chapter will focus on the traits of the Middle English

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<sup>6</sup> The most well known of the astrological fighting-men is the figure in Fiore dei Liberi's 1410 manual now in a private collection but reproduced in Hergell's edition, de Liberi, *Flos Duellatorum*, carta 17a. See also Filippo Vadi's figure in his manuscript; Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale, codice 1324, f.15r. A facsimile is available in Luca Porzio and Gregory Mele, eds., *Arte Gladitoria Dimicandi: 15th Century Swordsmanship of Master Filippo Vadi* (Union City, CA.: Chivalry Bookshelf, 2002). The astrological or zodiac man is described, in relation to medical theory, in Noga Arikha, *Passions and Tempers: A History of the Humours* (New York: Ecco, Harper Collins, 2007), 153-154.

<sup>7</sup> This striking example of the allegorical figure is in Paulus Kal's *Fechtbuch* of 1445-79, now Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS. 1825. The figure is reproduced in Leng, *Katalogue der Deutschsprachigen Illustrierten Handschriften*, plate vii.

<sup>8</sup> This is Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Manuscrit français 1996, a text that Anglo says "could scarcely be more anonymous." This is the only medieval work dedicated to the use of the axe and has very few parallels with other German, Italian or even English texts. Anglo dates the text to the fifteenth century, but suggests no more specific date. A transcription and translation appears in Anglo, "Le Jeu de la Hache."

texts by comparing them to German and Italian counterparts and other procedural writing. This process shows the unique properties of the Middle English texts in higher contrast.

### **Middle-English fight-texts and their readers**

All three Middle English fight-texts give instruction in the use of the two-hand sword.<sup>9</sup> This versatile weapon gained popularity with fighting men in the late fourteenth century and its appearance in their pages is considered a result of two technological trends: advances in armour; and the decline of the shield as the traditional companion to the sword. Correlation is not causation, however, and it is not entirely clear why the two-hand sword replaced the broadsword as the generic weapon of the man-at-arms.<sup>10</sup> Ewart Oakeshott tied the development of sword styles directly with advances in armour production, but he was aware that this process was not easily traceable or obviously linear.<sup>11</sup> Kelly De Vries likewise connected the development in

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<sup>9</sup> Titus is the only one of the three Middle English texts that contains instruction in anything other than the two-hand sword. One eight-line passage on f.105v contains "Strokez off ij hand staffe." Although Harley and Titus are explicit in their mention of the two-hand sword, is only assumed that this is the case with Additional. Based on the instructions regarding the student's hands and other references it is safe to make the claim that Additional is concerned with the two-hand sword.

<sup>10</sup> Military technology is its own specialized topic within material and martial history, but opinion is divided as to what factors are relevant in its development. There is a tendency to look at the process in strictly mechanistic terms — where technologies determine the course of development and the fashions of fighting elites. The two-hand sword is usually seen as a necessary development in weapons to counter the increased effectiveness of personal armour as the longer weapon, wielded with both hands, gave greater force to blows. However, this ignores other relevant factors such as the increased reliance on projectile weapons that would have prompted developments in defensive armour, the fact that longer swords appeared before this armour as a development of mounted warfare, the increased use of other two-hand staff-weapons that used similar techniques to the two-hand sword, and a growing distinction between weapons of war, (which increasingly defined the single-hand sword as a civilian or common weapon) and the longsword (a more specialized weapon for tourney, war, and the judicial duel). For a general discussion of fifteenth-century personal arms, see Graeme Rimer, "Weapons," in *Blood Red Roses: The Archaeology of a Mass Grave from the Battle of Towton AD 1461*, ed. Veronica Fiorato (Oxford: Oxbow, 2000), 119-129.

<sup>11</sup> Oakeshott's study of the evolution of medieval weapons remains one of the most cited texts on the subject and he developed a typology of sword styles that is still in use in military and material culture studies. Ewart Oakeshott, *The Archaeology of Weapons: Arms and Armour from Prehistory to the Age of Chivalry*. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1960), 301-340.

sword design to improvements in personal armour but also to changing battlefield tactics, the evolving roles of mounted and foot troops and the appearance of gunpowder weapons.<sup>12</sup> There is a circular nature to these arguments discussion and, for the purposes of the present study, its substance is largely moot. What is important is that this type of sword was one of the most popular and common tools of the professional and semi-professional fighter in the fifteenth century.

There is a tendency to think of the two-hand sword as a "knightly" weapon, a privileged weapon for the elite. While it is true that this weapon was used in the specialized, or privileged, arenas of the battlefield, tournament, and the judicial duel, its prominence in fight-texts is not, by itself, evidence for its elite status.<sup>13</sup> Identification of special weapons with elite status is a more modern concept, one that applies to the weapons favoured by duellists in the seventeenth century. The lighter swords of that period were only useful in the elite contexts of courtly display and the duel. Fight-texts were intended for an elite readership and often depict privileged behaviour — using full armour, fighting on horseback — but the weapons themselves were common tools of warfare and personal defence. It is the choice of text as a means of instruction that makes them elite.<sup>14</sup>

Is it no simple task to describe the likely readers of the Middle English fight-texts. Literacy in the fifteenth century was not the social marker that it had previously been in the past. J. B. Trapp points out that readers in the late middle ages represented a large and diverse cross-

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<sup>12</sup> Kelly DeVries, *Medieval Military Technology* (Peterborough ON.: University of Toronto, 2010), 20-25.

<sup>13</sup> Rimer, 121.

<sup>14</sup> Castle argues that there was a distinct class distinction between the users of the two-hand sword and sword and buckler, and that it was the latter that developed the art of fencing: 15-17. Castle omits to mention that the vast majority of elites who went about armed, day-to-day, did so with the smaller and more easily carried short sword. Class distinctions are only obvious in the context of pitched battle and the tournament. See also Anglo's discussion of swords and their specialized functions, *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, 95-105.



section of European society and that levels of functional literacy rapidly grew in the late fifteenth century. Facility with Latin had always been a mark of the clergy and those in important administrative positions outside the Church and Latinity remained a mark of formal education and elite status, but that group of readers grew as well.<sup>15</sup> Two of the three Middle English fight-texts appear in compilations of Latin and Middle English material, and it is safe to assume they were owned by Latinate readers. Our profile of the English consumer of these texts was therefore an male with some formal education in Latin grammar and rhetoric. The reader also had an interest in martial knowledge, perhaps for practical reasons connected to military obligations or out of aspiration for privileged skill. Our reader may have come from any place in the expanding ranks of the gentry and nobility. In the fifteenth century there was a steady increase in the number of English families that claimed gentry status and that coincided with their increased rates of literacy and material wealth. The status conscious Pastons of Norfolk are the prototypical example of this growing class of upwardly mobile country gentry and their taste in books reflects these interests.<sup>16</sup>

The most likely reader of the Middle English texts was educated, likely part of a land-owning family, and felt himself entitled to know and to practice the privileged knowledge of arms. The choice of text instruction suggests the reader was not part of a larger martial household where he would have learned his skill from an early age, as was the case for most men born into

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<sup>15</sup> J. B. Trapp, "Literacy, Books and Readers," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain Volume III, 1400-1557*, ed. Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 31-43.

<sup>16</sup> The Pastons were keen consumers of works on chivalry, courtly protocol and heraldry, as reflected in their extant book lists and manuscripts they commissioned. See Henry Stanley Bennett, *The Pastons and their England . Studies in an Age of Transition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1990), 261-262, Curt E Bühler, "Sir John Paston's Grete Booke, a Fifteenth-Century 'Best-Seller'," *Modern Language Notes* 56, no. 5 (1941): 345-351, and the more general study of gentry culture in the period by Christine Carpenter, "Gentry and Community in Medieval England," *Journal of British Studies* 33, no. 4 (1994): 340-380.

the martial culture of knighthood.<sup>17</sup> The owner of the Harley collection certainly had interests in alchemy and the natural sciences but was not necessarily a practitioner. The Titus manuscript shows a typical collection of literary curiosities for private reading by an educated owner. The Additional scroll implies that the reader may have had some legal connections, or a scribe trained in court protocol. All of these texts fit the reading interests of that large and difficult to define group of elite readers in fifteenth and sixteenth century England.

### **Text strategies in Middle English fight-texts**

The style of the Middle English instruction is fairly easy to describe as it shares many genre-specific characteristics with Middle English technical writing. However, there are several problems for the modern reader who hopes to interpret and reconstruct technique. Scholars of the German, Italian, and Latin fight-texts have the benefit of a specialized vocabulary that uses terms found only in fight-books, but in sufficient quantities that permit readers to safely determine their meaning. In contrast, the Middle English texts use a unique set of terms, often with multiple meanings that appear to change depending on context. Since the corpus of English texts is small, comparison of terms amongst them rarely clears up the confusion. Sydney Anglo revealed his frustration with this ambiguous vocabulary when he described the manuscripts:

They assume so much knowledge [on the part of the reader], and use so many unexplained technical terms, that their writings are now barely comprehensible. We stumble at the very *first fflorysh* with its *quarter fayre before you*; its *broken foyne*; and its *Rakes* lightly *Clevyng by thelbowes...* . We stagger through thirteen *Chaces* including *alle the rowndys*, the *tumblyng chace*, the *Spryng*, the *four poyntes*, and the *gettyng chace*; become entangled in counters such as the *full spryng* and the *shorte*

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<sup>17</sup> For a good description of the typical medieval upbringing in knightly families see Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe*, The Middle Ages series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 20-66.

*spryng with fallyng stroke*; and are bemused by a whole series of *Rabetes*, including the *stopping Rabette*, the *dragonys tayle withe the pendaunte*, and the *duble rabett*.<sup>18</sup>

Anglo suggests that "it is possible to gloss several of the terms and to make informed guesses about others," but he chooses not to do so.<sup>19</sup> There remains the question of how certain the definitions are, considering that they are based either on context or on a small number of occurrences found outside the fight-texts. The problem remains, as Anglo rightly pointed out, that there are no relevant English works to supply the reader "with the kind of key we have for Liechtenauer," whose fourteenth-century verses that define the standard vocabulary for most German fight-texts.<sup>20</sup>

We might expect that avoiding the issue of reconstructing technique would save us the trouble of definitions but the problem cannot be avoided. Part of the reason why these texts are such a challenge for scholars is that meanings that appear self-evident, seem to change in strange and confusing ways. Such is the case with words like *quarter*, *half*, *sengyll*, and *dowbyll* which can appear in one place as nouns or adjectives, but in others as verbs or adverbs.<sup>21</sup> This becomes even more complicated when one finds these terms in combinations that seem contradictory.

The transcriptions used in this chapter will be paired with simple translations for easier reading and to highlight the issues of grammatical structure. Terms such as *foyne* and *smyte*, are safely translated as "thrust" and "strike," and *hauke*, (or *auke*), is likely another term for a thrust or strike.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Anglo, *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, 123.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. Anglo refers here to Nürnberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Codex Hs 3227a, the glossed collection of Liechtenauer's instructional verses.

<sup>21</sup> A brief but useful discussion of this context specific use of common words is Rossell Hope Robbins, "Variable Meanings of Technical Terms," *American Speech* 25, no. 2 (1950): 149-150.

<sup>22</sup> Hester, "The Vse of the Two Hand Sworde," 18. Hester translates *Hauke* and variations in the Harley text as a type of cut. The *auke* appears in the Titus text and is likely a variation on *Hauke*. *Quarter* is a term that often

All three of the Middle English fight-texts use the same text strategy that Irma Taavitsainen calls "paratactical." This system uses short sentences that follow a "temporal sequence" combining steps in the task with "temporal adverbs" in a linear structure.<sup>23</sup> We can see this system in action with an example taken from Harley.<sup>24</sup>

þe | ferst grounde begynnyþ w<sup>t</sup> an hauke | beryng in w<sup>t</sup> þe foote w<sup>t</sup> a double Rownde...<sup>25</sup>

[The first exercise begins with a blow bearing in with the foot with a double round...]<sup>26</sup>

This formula follows a grammatical pattern of articles, adjectives, nouns, and verbs connected with prepositional phrases and conjunctions which build a strictly linear list of actions. The pattern in the Titus text, which contains instruction in the sword and the staff, is almost identical.

Fyrste a Rownde for the waste sengyll w<sup>t</sup> a fune | also a quarter w<sup>t</sup> a fune. a Rake sengyll w<sup>t</sup> a fune...<sup>27</sup>

[First a *round* to the waste single with a thrust also a quarter with a thrust a *rake* single with a thrust...]

The pattern in Additional is less spare than Harley or Titus, although the instruction become more

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appears as both an adjective and as a noun in the three texts. Hester suggests *quarter* is a blow aimed at one of the four quarters of the body, but this use does not seem consistent in all contexts. Printed fight-texts in English, which appear after 1595, abandon almost all of the terms used in the Middle English manuscripts in favour of Italian, Spanish and French terminology, but diligent researchers continue to look for medieval survivals in seventeenth-century English works. Results of this work are not encouraging. See examples of this in Heslop and Bradak, *Lessons on the English Longsword*, 12-21.

<sup>23</sup> Taavitsainen, "Middle English Recipes," 98.

<sup>24</sup> None of the Middle English texts give any detail as to the style of appropriate sword. There is considerable variety in style and features of extant swords but these do not appear to be relevant to the lessons. Any sword that could support a one- or two-hand grip would have been suitable.

<sup>25</sup> MS Harley 3542, f. 82, lines 2-4. Original line breaks in the manuscripts are indicated in these transcriptions with "|" and abbreviations have been expanded in italics. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are not regularized. All notes refer to line numbers used in the transcriptions found in the appendices. A detailed description of the apparatus is included before the appendices.

<sup>26</sup> The *OED* defines *round* as another kind of blow, however, the definition is based on the appearance of the word in Harley and one other text where the meaning is only implied.

<sup>27</sup> MS Cotton Titus A xxv, f. 105, lines 1-2.

compressed and less descriptive in later lessons. Additional tends to make more reference to quantity and quality of various movements and occasionally directs instruction to specific limbs, but the general structure is consistent with the other manuscripts.

A quarter fayre before yow <deleveryde> w<sup>t</sup> oon hande voydyng bake | the ryght fote. wyth <another> quarter w<sup>t</sup> bothe hands...<sup>28</sup>

[A *quarter* carefully before you delivered with one hand retreating (moving) back the right foot with another *quarter* with both hands...]<sup>29</sup>

These lists of instructions can be broken down into repeated combinations of terms that identify types of action. The author can take a term, such as Titus's "rownde," and add an indication of quantity or quality, to modify that action, "for the waste sengyll." The lesson then attaches more movements with their own qualifications to build the sequence, such as "w<sup>t</sup> a fune | also a quarter w<sup>t</sup> a fune." The lessons continue in this way, often omitting objects and adverbs.<sup>30</sup> Several lessons in the Harley, Titus and Additional texts end with a formula that may refer to a specific position the student should return to, or a phrase that signals to the student that the lesson is complete.<sup>31</sup>

Broken down into a formula, each of the fight-texts presents sets of instructions with three parts, usually in a fixed order:

A: The combination of actions is identified with a general category (*chase, poynt, or counter*).

B: The movements are listed in a linear sequence using combinations of a variable vocabulary.

C: The conclusion of the sequence is indicated to the reader with a repeated formula.

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<sup>28</sup> MS Additional 39564, line 1-2.

<sup>29</sup> Context implies that *quarter* is an action of the sword, performed with one hand. However, other instructions suggest that *quarter* may be modifying a movement that has been omitted, something that appears to happen at various points in the English texts.

<sup>30</sup> Taavitsainen, "Middle English Recipes," 99-100.

<sup>31</sup> Many of the Harley lessons end with the direction of "settyng | downe þe swerde by þ<sup>e</sup> foete," as in line 62-63 or with the phrase "hond | & þe foete a corde," at line 30-31. The *hand, head, eye to accord*, formula appears in both the Additional and Titus texts as well. The *laying down of the sword* appears in Harley and Additional.

Only A and B appear in all of the Middle English lessons, and C is more common in the Harley and Titus texts. The first lesson in the Titus text arranges these units as A-B. The second and third lesson is A-B-C. More rare are phrases that give the reader added context or suggest alternative movements.

D: The function or value of the sequence is described.

E: The reader is given a choice of actions, based on circumstances.

The sixth lesson from Harley, at lines 23-24 uses only A-B-D, while in Additional, the lesson that begins at line 92 combines these units into A-E-B-C.

This approach represents the simplest form of procedural instruction, where the goal is to help the reader with "movement-mimicri."<sup>32</sup> The lack of a gloss or even an introduction for the reader suggests that the reader already understood the text's vocabulary. Even with the rigid formula, the vocabulary remains problematic and there are few clues as to how each list of instructions should be parsed. A selection from Additional illustrates this point:

A downe ryght | stroke voydyng bake the lyffte fote standyng styll play iij Rakys  
lythly | Clevyng by the[e]lbowes w<sup>t</sup> a quarter fayre before yow wyth both handys<sup>33</sup>

[A *downright* stroke moving back the left foot standing still play 3 *rakes* lightly  
cleaving (cutting) by the elbows with a *quarter* carefully (directly) before you with  
both hands]

This could be parsed in at least two different ways; "voydyng bake the lyfte fote" may be a verb phrase in which the foot is what is *voided*. In that case, the student is to "play iij Rakys" while standing still. Alternatively the "Downe ryght stroke" is *voided* back while the left foot is standing still (which also implies that the left foot may be in motion).<sup>34</sup> If nothing else, this

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<sup>32</sup> Jill Beck, "Labanotation: Implication for the Future of Dance," quoted in Fügedi, 397.

<sup>33</sup> Additional, lines 3-4

<sup>34</sup> As an example of how this affects modern readings of the texts, Heslop and Bradak's interpretation of the

demonstrates the importance of punctuation as a means of providing meaning. Thus, our two alternate interpretations can be read as follows:

[A downright stroke, *voiding* back the left foot, (while) standing still play 3 *rakes*]

[A downright stroke *voiding* back, the left foot standing still, play 3 *rakes*]

Anglo's assurance that some of the terms can be understood from context works in simple combinations, but the longer strings of movements are much more difficult to untangle. An example is the term *quarter* which, in some cases, appears to be an adjective, as in "a quarter cros" or "an hauke quarter."<sup>35</sup> In these instances *quarter* could refer to a quality of the *cros* or the *hauke*. However, in Titus, *quarter* appears as a noun, "a quarter w<sup>t</sup> a fune."<sup>36</sup> The same is true of other terms such as *single*, *double*, and *rake*. These differences may suggest a kind of short-hand was used that omits terms at certain points, in order to compress longer, more complex sequences.

This text strategy is very different from those used in the German and Italian fight-texts of the fifteenth and sixteenth century. Most of the illustrated manuals were designed in a way that could present readers with complex interactions between opponents and rules to guide action. In contrast, the Middle English texts appear to provide instruction to only one combatant. English fight-texts do not present a scenario where the various movements and combinations would be appropriate, but this is a major feature of continental manuscripts. Harley occasionally mentions the "adversary" and "enmy" but usually only refers to the opponent as "hym."<sup>37</sup> Titus refers to

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Additional text adds conjunctions to make this line read "[now, execute] a downright stroke [while] voiding back the left foot, [and then] standing still, play three rakes lithely(ing?) by the elbows with both hands." *Lessons on the English Longsword*, 61.

<sup>35</sup> MS Harley, lines 6 and 13.

<sup>36</sup> MS Titus, line 2.

<sup>37</sup> See Harley lines 97, 121, 127.

"hym," twice but it is unclear whether this refers to the opponent or the student.<sup>38</sup> Additional is more specific in its reference to an opponent, occasionally directing the student to aim blows at specific targets as in the "*profer | to hys face.*" An opponent is rarely present in the English manuals.<sup>39</sup> Also, there are only two occasions in Additional where the reader is given options to choose in a lesson; once in response to an opponent's actions, while the other is without such context.<sup>40</sup>

The text reads like the transcription of one side of a conversation, or a record of one half of a choreography. James Hester likened the texts to *kata*, the practice drills of modern Japanese martial arts.<sup>41</sup> Modern *kata* include carefully choreographed sequences of movements that can be practised by an individual or in combination with an opponent who follows his own set of drills.<sup>42</sup> Drills are one of the basic forms of physical instruction, a process of repetitive movement designed to imprint proper action into the student's memory. This is a stage in learning motor skills is called "the associative phase," in cognitive studies, "which represents a transition between the verbally conscious phase into the more automated one."<sup>43</sup> This instruction is closely tied to oral and tactile communication, demonstration, and imitation.

If this is the function of the Middle English texts, it accounts for the complete absence of definitions and explanations. Drills focus on "how" to the exclusion of "why." Because of the

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<sup>38</sup> Titus, lines 18, 20.

<sup>39</sup> Additional, line 75-76.

<sup>40</sup> This formula appears in Additional at the "stoppyng Rabetts" at line 98 and again in "The xviiij<sup>th</sup> callyde þ<sup>e</sup> duple rabetts" at line 171.

<sup>41</sup> Hester argues this in both "The Vse of the Two Hand Sworde," and "Real Men Read Poetry: Instructional Verse in 14th-Century Fight Manuals," *Arms & Armour* 6, no. 2 (2009): 175-183.

<sup>42</sup> Modern Japanese fencing, or kendo, uses these training techniques to practice form, posture and comportment for their own sake and to supplement the combative training. Kendo *kata* comprise a number of choreographies of increasing complexity: see Hiroshi Ozawa, *Kendo the Definitive Guide*, trans. Angela Turzynski (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1997), 97-119.

<sup>43</sup> Fügedi, 396.



close relationship between oral instruction and this early cognitive phase, only procedural knowledge is necessary, or even advisable, for the student. At the later cognitive level of motor training, the "automated phase," the student learns and adapts his performance based on more conceptual and theoretical instruction. The movements and techniques learned earlier are then ingrained, and theoretical or conceptual instruction to complement the student's evolving style and level of skill.<sup>44</sup>

Thankfully, Hester's to Japanese *Kata* is not anachronistic. The ubiquitous late-Roman manual of military strategy, the *De re militari* of Renatus Vegetius, described the use of a static target (*palum*) for practice with weighted swords.<sup>45</sup> Instructors "exercised [recruits] with these at the post both morning and afternoon."<sup>46</sup> Training at a post could easily incorporate simple choreographed drills. Writers in the sixteenth century describe similar teaching techniques that use drills and practice forms. Richard Mulcaster, writing in 1581, mentions practice "against a stake or pillar" as well as "a counterfet adversarie" or practice combats "against a shadow."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> For a discussion of the popularity and influence of Vegetius and the considerable number of derivations of his work, see Christopher Allmand, "The *De re militari* of Vegetius in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance," in *Writing War: Medieval Literary Responses to Warfare*, ed. Corinne Saunders, Francoise Le Saux, and Neil Thomas (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 15-28, and Dominique T. Hoche, *The Reception of Christine de Pizan's Fais d'Armes in Fifteenth-Century England: Chivalric Self-Fashioning* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2007). So popular was Vegetius that some have argued that his work was a major impediment to the adaptation of military strategy to changes in technology and other logistical and cultural factors: Sydney Anglo, "Vegetius' *de re militari*: The Triumph of Mediocrity," *Antiquaries Journal*, no. 82 (2002): 247-267.

<sup>46</sup> Flavius Vegetius Renatus, *Military Institutions of Vegetius, in Five Books, Translated From the Original Latin. With a Preface and Notes*, trans. John Clarke (London: John Clarke, W. Griffin, 1767), 21-22.

<sup>47</sup> Mulcaster is quoted in Anglo, *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, 27. Mulcaster's discussion of training with the sword is in much the same spirit as Gunterodte in that the signal value of the practice is for the strengthening of the body and mind. The reference to this type of training is as follows:

The vse of the weapon is allowed for an exercise, and may stand vs at this daie now liuing, and our posteritie in great stede, as wel as it did those which went before vs. Who vsed it *warlike* for valiauntnesse in armes, and actiuitie in the field, *gamelike* to winne garlandes and prices, and to please the people in solemne meetings: *Physicklike* to purchase therby a good hauiour of body and continuance of health. Herof they made three kindes, one to fight against an aduersarie in deede, an other against a stake or piller as a counterfet aduersarie, the third against any thing in imagination, but nothing in sight,

Mulcaster and Ascham followed the trend amongst early modern writers who promoted training in arms as physical exercise, rather than as a step towards prowess, but this interest allowed them to describe that training process in greater detail than their more martially inclined predecessors.<sup>48</sup> English readers may have known the special terms well enough to use these texts as private practice, repeating the sequences in order to memorize the motor action. If that was the function of these texts it helps explain why there are no guiding principles, suggested options, or means of arranging the actions for different scenarios; they are for practice and repetition, not problem solving.

There was some hope that comparison of the English material with continental contemporaries might shed some light on their function and meaning. There is no reason to think that martial knowledge did not spread as easily as philosophical, scientific, technical and political ideas. Such movement were common amongst learned elites, craftsmen, merchants, and students.<sup>49</sup> The search for such connections to the English corpus of fight-texts is more

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which they called *σχινομαχία*, a fight against a shadow. All these were practised either in *armes*, or *v*narmed.

Richard Mulcaster, *Positions wherein those primitive circumstances be examined, which are necessarie for the training vp of children, either for skill in their booke, or health in their bodie* (London: Thomas Vautrollier for Thomas Chare [i.e. Chard], 1581), 77. Ascham, first writing in 1545, was advocating mandatory training of English youth in the use of the longbow and regular practice was essential. Most other contemporary writers discuss training in relation to marching and drill rather than individual use of arms but it is clear they are referring to this same style of repetitive work rather than "free play" with an adversary or in situations closer to military reality. For a general discussion of these writers and their ideas on training see Henry J. Webb, *Elizabethan Military Science: The Books and the Practice* (Madison, WI.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), particularly 51-77.

<sup>48</sup> Gunterodt's history of combat, mentioned in chapter 1, contains a similar thesis that argued in support of training in arms as a morally and physically beneficial activity.

<sup>49</sup> National borders, languages, and dialects, were never much of an impediment to the spread of knowledge in Europe even within specialized fields such as technical and craft knowledge. See the classic essay on cultural diffusion by Georges Duby, "The Diffusion of Cultural Patterns in Feudal Society," *Past & Present*, no. 39 (1968): 3-10; and the study of an English context for the distribution of knowledge and cultural practices in P. R. Coss, "Aspects of Cultural Diffusion in Medieval England: The Early Romances, Local Society and Robin Hood," *Past & Present*, no. 108 (1985): 35-79. For a more specific discussion of the movement of books between England and the continent, see David Rundle, "English Books and the Continent," in *The Production of Books in*

problematic but the results are important. James Hester does not claim that the drills in the Middle English manuscripts have direct analogues with any of the the continental material, but he has focused on the verse section in Harley and sees in it links with some German fight-books.<sup>50</sup> The Harley verses superficially resemble a pedagogical strategy found in several early German works that use mnemonic poetry, but there is no real connection, even in pedagogical approach.

The Harley verses consist of 46 lines on f. 84-85.<sup>51</sup> Each line comprises eight to twelve syllables, with rhymed line ends but no additional metrical pattern.<sup>52</sup> These verses do not adapt the prose instruction, rather they form a separate composition, based on the structure and vocabulary of the linear prose. Movements are still listed in a sequence, but they are framed within slightly more descriptive language and are not designed to be followed like the prose material. The verses begin in a prose layout on the page for the first nine lines, the rhymed lines separated by virgules before switching to a verse layout. Virgules are indicated in the transcription with a forward slash.

[A] man þ<sup>t</sup> wol to þ<sup>e</sup> to hond swerd lern boþ<sup>e</sup>  
close & cler / He most haue a goede eye  
boþ<sup>e</sup> far & nere / & an in stop & an owte  
stop & an hauke quarter / A cauntel a doblent an  
half for hys fer / Too rowndys & an halfe w<sup>t</sup>  
a goode cher / This ys þ<sup>e</sup> ferst cownter of þ<sup>e</sup>

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*England 1350-1500*, ed. Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 276-291.

<sup>50</sup> Heslop and Bradak exhibit a remarkable proficiency in stretching the evidence for their reconstructions, but their pursuit of analogues with German, Italian, and post-seventeenth-century martial vocabulary produces some problematic readings, in particularly their definitions of the guards and types of blows: *Lessons on the English Longsword*, 35-47. Hester, "Real Men Read Poetry," argues for an analogy with the German verses but more for links in pedagogical style and a shared valuation of martial knowledge and not the specific vocabulary. Brown (*A Transcription*), makes reference to the German texts and their similarities to the English texts but does not construct an argument.

<sup>51</sup> S. Knott has added a title, "The play with the 2 hand sword in verse."

<sup>52</sup> Simple rhyme patterns like this are very common in Middle English, particularly in short devotional verse (see Rossell Hope Robbins, "Popular Prayers in Middle English Verse," *Modern Philology* 36, no. 4 (1939): 337-350) and practical verse (*Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952)).

toohond swerd sere /...<sup>53</sup>

[A man that would to the two hand sword [must] look both  
close and clear<sup>54</sup> / He must have a good eye  
both far and near / and an *in stop* and an *out*  
*stop* and a *hauke quarter* / A *cauntel* a *doublet* a<sup>55</sup>  
half along with it<sup>56</sup> / Two *rownds* and a *half* with  
a good cheer / This is the first counter of the  
two hand sword [of] many/ ...]

This verse section is difficult to explain in the context of the English fight-text corpus, but it takes on greater significance when one looks at the continental contemporaries. Explaining this particular red-herring will require something of a digression but it will help build the argument in support of the unique nature of English fight-texts.

### **Merkversen, mnemonics, and poetry**

The earliest unillustrated fight-text is a German manuscript dated to 1389. It is thought to be the work of the cleric and swordsman Hanko Döbringer. Döbringer's collection is a mix of metallurgy and astronomical medicine with verse instructions from his fight-master, Johannes Liechtenauer and Döbringer's own gloss.<sup>57</sup> The fight-texts cover a wide range of combative

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<sup>53</sup> MS Harley lines, 138-144. In line 138 there is a blank left for the initial letter that is three lines tall. Hutton's edition omits this, while the Wright and Halliwell edition inserts "The": Hutton, 39; Wright and Halliwell, 308. Hester suggests "A" for the blank: Hester "The Vse of the Two Hand Sworde," 21. The transcription contained in this thesis agrees with Hester's interpretation.

<sup>54</sup> Terry Brown, in a manuscript edition of a forthcoming work on the Middle-English texts, suggests that "close" and "clere" should be translated as "covered and clear" with the meaning as "secret and open" or "advanced and basic": Terry Brown, *A Transcription of ff. 84-84 of Harley 3542* (unpublished manuscript, 2009), 9.

<sup>55</sup> Hester reads "cantel" and "doublet" as specialized terms for types of blows, respectively "a cut delivered with a swing around the body for strength" and "a cut horizontally across the mid-section": "the Vse of the Two Hand Sworde," 59. Brown declines to suggest a specific reading of *cauntel* but considers *doblet* to be a mis-spelling of "double": *A Transcription*, 15-17.

<sup>56</sup> Both Brown and Hester suggest "companions" for *fer*. The use of "peers" maintains the meaning while preserving some of the metrical feel: Hester, "The Vse of the Two Hand Sworde," 59, Brown, *A Transcription*, 17. However, Yin Liu pointed out to the author that *hys fer* likely means "along with it" in reference to the *cauntel* and *doblet*.

<sup>57</sup> Nürnberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Hs. 3227a. The text is dated based on a calendar prepared by

scenarios: long-sword, short-sword, *messer* (a variety of long fighting-knife), combat in armour, and wrestling. The Döbringer collection is considered, by Hester and Brown, as an important link between the Middle English texts and their German counterparts linked by a shared use of mnemonic verse poetry.

Liechtenauer's verses use a pedagogical strategy variously called *Merkversen* or *Zeteln*. This was a mnemonic system that is easily identifiable by its frequent use of the word *merk* (mark, note), at the beginning of verse stanzas. Each stanza was kept short to make the information compact and easily memorized.<sup>58</sup> This system of short, easily remember phrases have the hallmarks of an oral practice transferred directly to text. Döbringer's collection imbeds the verses into his prose gloss which obscures the original verse structure. Sigmund Ringeck's fifteenth-century gloss of Liechtenauer's instructions arranges the verses into discrete stanzas and it is this version that is more useful in a comparison.<sup>59</sup> Döbringer and Ringeck begin their commentaries with a short introduction of basic concepts of the art in *Merkverse*. This selection from Christian Tobler's edition of Ringeck shows Liechtenauer's verse structure:

Wilt du kunst schawen  
sich link gen vnd recht mitt hawen  
vnd linck mit rechtem  
ist das du starck gerest fechten

[If you want to behold the art,

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Döbringer and included in the volume: See Leng, *Katalog der Deutschsprachigen Illustrierten Handschriften*, 5, 16-17; Trude Ehlert and Rainer Leng, "Frühe Koch- und Pulverrezepte aus der Nürnberger Handschrift 3227a (um 1389)," in *Medizin in Geschichte, Philologie und Ethnologie: Festschrift für Gundolf Keil*, ed. Dominik Groß and Monika Reininger (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003), 289-290. The arrangement of the material is somewhat random and it is unclear how much of the modern arrangement preserves the original. Leng's catalogue description lists 19 items; 8 are topical collections of instruction in combat.

<sup>58</sup> This approach is associated in German instruction with oral patterns of teaching, see Müller, "Bild - Vers - Proskommentar," 259.

<sup>59</sup> Ringeck's manuscript is Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek Mscr. Dresd. C 487 and is dated to the fifteenth century: Wierschin, 14.

left against him and right while striking,  
And left to right,  
is how you strongly want to fight]<sup>60</sup>

These prefatory verses move on to more specific instructions for different combative situations and scenarios. Ringeck has added a topical title to each stanza to aid the reader but the verse style is left untouched:

Von hed trucken  
Dein schnyde wende  
zu flechenn drück dein hende

[The Pressing of the Hands  
Your cutting edge turn,  
to the wrists press your hands.]<sup>61</sup>

The verses retain a cryptic feel, although there is no reason to believe they are deliberately coded to obscure meaning from the uninitiated.<sup>62</sup> A cryptic style is instead a byproduct of compression to the smallest and most easily remembered verse. The glosses and commentaries expand the verses into a fuller, non-mnemonic, forms. All other collections of martial *Merkverse* contain

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<sup>60</sup> This transcription and translation is from Sigmund Ringeck and Christian Henry Tobler, *Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship: Sigmund Ringeck's Commentaries on Liechtenauer's Verses* (Union City, Ca.: Chivalry Bookshelf, 2002), 2. Tobler has re-arranged the text into verse layout for the modern reader. The original manuscript arranges the text as prose with no visual cue for verse.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>62</sup> The question of intentional obscurity in these texts has been discussed briefly in Jeffrey Forgeng and Alex Kiermayer, "The Chivalric Art: German Martial Arts Treatises of the Middle Ages and Renaissance," in *The Cutting Edge: Studies in Ancient and Medieval Combat*, ed. Barry Molloy (Stroud: Tempus Books, 2007), 153-167. The authors do not consider the cryptic nature of the instruction to be a deliberate attempt at concealment. Although there is ample evidence for intentional secrecy in occult, esoteric and technical writing, there are no works on military technology, strategy, and tactics that exhibit these traits of deliberate secrecy. See Pamela O. Long and Alex Roland, "Military Secrecy in Antiquity and Early Medieval Europe: A Critical Reassessment," *History and Technology* 11 (1994): 259-290. John Clements argues several times that these manuals are difficult to understand, in part, because of deliberate obfuscation on the part of the writers. Clements also interprets that frequent cautions to the reader that the knowledge contained in the manuals is privileged and not to be shared easily as proof that the knowledge was also secret: John Clements, "Fiore Dei Liberi: 15th-Century Master of Arms" in Clements and Hull, eds. *Masters of Medieval and Renaissance Martial Arts*:117-142. Considering that the most common (and practical) means of concealing knowledge from the common reader is to compose the text in Latin, it is significant that so few fight-manuals appear in Latin.

glosses; there are no collections of the verses on their own.<sup>63</sup> Hester does not suggest that *merkversen* directly influenced the English texts, he argues that similarities between the two sources are evidence of a similar general approach to martial pedagogy through the use of verse mnemonics.<sup>64</sup> Significant differences in the style and function of German and English mnemonics undermines this argument.

The use of verse as a strategy for practical writing and instruction is well represented in both in German and English literature, both vernacular and Latin. Linne Mooney has shown that poetry was a popular medium for presenting rudimentary medical, astrological, and technical information, as well as devotional, moralistic and juridical knowledge and examples survive in considerable numbers.<sup>65</sup> The appeal of the verse style is its easy mnemonic function; however, not all verse was intended as mnemonic and there is no reason to believe the glosses that accompany *merkversen* was supposed to be memorized by readers. The mnemonic approach in the German texts also present different kinds of information than that of the Middle English texts, particularly the use of the "if then" structure common in German and Italian fight-texts.<sup>66</sup>

The linear structure of the English fight-texts, described previously does not allow for adaptation or modification. Each lesson is followed as one might follow instructions for the assembly of a piece of furniture. The order is fixed and the result is not in question. Continental

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<sup>63</sup> Wierschin lists 47 manuscripts and print collections that contain or reference Liechtenauer's instructions. He was by far the most influential of the late medieval masters. 12-40.

<sup>64</sup> Hester, "Real Men Read Poetry," 180-183.

<sup>65</sup> See the overview of Mooney's work on poetry in medical, astrological, and technical writing in "Manuscript Evidence for the Use of Medieval English Scientific and Utilitarian Texts," in *Interstices: Studies in Middle English and Anglo-Latin Texts in Honour of A. G. Rigg*, ed. R. F. Green and L. E. Voigts (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004), 184-202. More specific studies by Mooney include "A Middle English Verse Compendium of Astrological Medicine," *Medical History* 28 (1984): 406-419, and "A Middle English Text on the Seven Liberal Arts," *Speculum* 68, no. 4 (1993): 1027-1052. Mooney was James Hester's supervisor in his thesis at the University of York.

<sup>66</sup> Hester uses this term to describe the formula in "Real Men Read Poetry," 180.

fight-texts, both the prose and illustrated varieties, tend to build their instruction around questions of "if-then." Readers are given a combative scenario where a range of options are available to the combatant. This is the core of the *merkversen* as guiding instruction. The structure is easily shown by adding the "if-then" as needed in this example from Ringeck:

Dein schnyde wende  
zu flechenn drück dein hende

[If] your cutting edge turn,  
[then] to the wrists press your hands.

There are a few places in the Harley verses where one could imagine such a structure but it is not an essential part of the verses and it is rarely found in any of the English prose lessons.

*Merkverse* easily lends itself to that "if-then" structure and short, easily remembered rules of action. This type of verse mnemonic may be an artifact of oral instruction common in German fight-schools, but later readers needed the commentary in order to understand it and use it outside the confines of formal instruction. *Merkversen* and other German instructional strategies such as *Lehrversen* (educational verses) may look like the Harley verses but their content is fundamentally different. These German texts contain declarative knowledge, the *why* that justifies the choices made about *how*.

Hester builds an argument in favour of the mnemonic function of the Harley verses, partly through comparison with the German texts, but he also sees similarities with practical verses in English.<sup>67</sup> Hester's examples from medical writing is persuasive, but it is still difficult to know when a verse passage is intended as mnemonic, or is in verse for other aesthetic reasons.

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<sup>67</sup> Hester, "Real Men Read Poetry," 176. This text is discussed in greater detail in Mooney, "Manuscript Evidence for the Use of Medieval English Scientific and Utilitarian Texts," 193-6.



Elizabeth Eisenstein, while describing the difference between "learning to read" and "learning from reading," inadvertently draws attention to this problem. The pedagogical function of a text is equally varied as one may have been designed to *record* information as a supplement to memory and those texts designed to *teach* that information to an otherwise uninformed reader.<sup>68</sup> English martial drills may not have been intended for memorization, but they are only useful to the reader who already has the context, vocabulary, and special meanings of the instruction in their own memory. These texts cannot teach the reader anything they do not already know.

There are other alternatives to verse as a mnemonic tool. Word associations, symbolic imagery, and other types of cognitive strategies were advocated over simple verse systems.<sup>69</sup> *Merkversen* were designed for easy memorization, but there is no persuasive evidence that the Harley verses functioned in the same way. The Harley verses contain some of this guidance for correct action but only at certain points, and they never approach the declarative certainty of the German texts.<sup>70</sup> It is worth noting that purely procedural knowledge is rarely presented in verse. Some texts that contain considerable amounts of procedural instruction, such as recipe collections and texts on ritual magic, avoid verse instruction entirely.<sup>71</sup> There remains a final explanation for the Harley verses; they may not have been intended as exclusively instructional. The English

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<sup>68</sup> Eisenstein's argument is primarily about levels of literacy, but the same argument should be made to explain different types of texts that may not be able to function as instruction entirely alone: Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 38.

<sup>69</sup> Relevant studies on this point include Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Pimlico, 1966), particularly 93-113.. See also the more recent work by Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture.*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), particularly 274-337.

<sup>70</sup> The verse on selling property is included in Robbins, *Secular Lyrics*, 70. Robbins concludes that this text was likely mnemonic in function, considering the number of surviving copies and their contexts.

<sup>71</sup> Although the text strategies of occult and ritual magic texts are not part of these studies, the material in the following works show the range of approach and the lack of verse as a means of communication. Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, Frank Klaassen, "English Manuscripts of Magic: 1300-1500, a Preliminary Survey," in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, ed. Claire Fanger (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 3-31, and "Learning and Masculinity in Manuscripts of Ritual Magic of the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance," *The Sixteenth-century Journal*. 38, no. 1 (2007): 49-76.

martial verses may be little more than an exercise in creatively assembling the terminology of fight-instruction for the entertainment of a knowledgeable reader. English composers were not above such affectation, even in non-literary and non-devotional texts.<sup>72</sup>

Gellrich's model for text production helps to explain the German approach to fight-texts. Prose manuals that glossed *merkversen* follow the examples of the *Fachtprosa* and *Kunstabchlein* genres, the technical literature of artisans, craftsmen, and engineers. Döbringer and Ringeck's works appeared at the same time as the German shop manuals and easily adapted their strategies for a learned readership. The illustrated texts, although sharing some of the traits of *Fachtprosa*, are instead modelled (often self-consciously), on illustrated manuals of military technology and pursued a more elite readership.<sup>73</sup> The connection between these genres was so close that several illustrated fight-texts share space with selections from Konrad Kyser's *Bellifortis*. For some German authors and readers martial instruction and military technology were considered parts of the same intellectual family.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> A good example of the use of artistic text styles in otherwise non-literary texts is the late fifteenth-century adaptation of Vegetius that uses a poetic structure evocative of contemporary French literature: See Daniel Wakelin, "The Occasion, Author, and Readers of Knyghthode and Bataile," *Medium Aevum* 73 (2004): 260-272, Daniel Wakelin, "Scholarly Scribes and the Creation of Knyghthode and Bataile," *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700* 14 (2005): 26-45.

<sup>73</sup> Illustrated manuals of military technology appeared in the late fourteenth century, but it was Konrad Kyser's *Bellifortis*, produced between 1402-5 with the help of monastically trained illustrators, that propelled the genre to its elevated status. For a biography of Kyser, see Láng, 71-72. See also the discussion of Kyser's original text and the facsimile by Götz Quarg in Lynn White Jr., "Kyeser's 'Bellifortis': The First Technological Treatise of the Fifteenth Century," *Technology and Culture* 10, no. 3 (1969): 436-441. Other illustrated manuals on military technology, particularly those focused on artillery and other pyrotechnics, are called *Feuerwerkbücher*: See Gerhard W. Kramer, ed., *The Firework Book: Gunpowder in Medieval Germany*, trans. Klaus Liebnitz, vol. 17, The Arms and Armour Society (London: The Arms and Armour Society, 2001). The first illustrated fight-text does happen to pre-date *Bellifortis* but it does not appear to have exerted much influence on the development of fight texts in Germany or elsewhere. This is Leeds, Royal Armouries, MS I 33, an illustrated manual in Latin and German, likely produced in an ecclesiastical setting around 1320 and it is a fascinating text in its own right, still not entirely understood. See Jeffrey Singman, "The Medieval Swordsman: a 13th Century German Fencing Manuscript," *Royal Armouries Yearbook* 2 (1998): 129-136, and Forgeng, *The Medieval Art of Swordsmanship*. For a detailed provenance, see Cinato and Surprenant, *Le Livre de L'art du Combat*, xv-xxviii.

<sup>74</sup> *Bellifortis* itself was a popular text to copy. Rainer Leng lists 44 late medieval copies or partial copies. Rainer Leng, *Ars belli: deutsche taktische und kriegstechnische Bildhandschriften und Traktate im 15. und 16.*

English writers had different models to follow. English readers did have access to illustrated texts on military technology but they do not appear to have influenced personal instruction in arms.<sup>75</sup> The closest analogue is with contemporary English recipe texts. Hester sees the alchemical company that Harley shares with some German manuals as another point of similarity and suggests English readers valued martial knowledge as they valued the sciences.<sup>76</sup> Based on what we know about the late medieval classifications of knowledge and the way that structure influenced the creation and use of practical writing does not support that claim.

### **"Fighting is an alchemical mystery"<sup>77</sup>**

It remains difficult to know the details of the debate but medieval classifications of knowledge had an influence on how martial skill was understood by its practitioners and how it was recorded in text. It influenced, in the first place, the decision to record the information in text

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- Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2002). At least three medieval fight-texts include excerpts from *Bellifortis* or other manuals on military technology. See Leng, *Katalogue der Deutschsprachigen Illustrierten Handschriften*.
- <sup>75</sup> The exception is the 1473-4 print edition of *De re Militari*, (translated and adapted by Roberto Valturio and printed in Utrecht by Giovanni de Verona, 1472), which does appear in English catalogues of the early sixteenth-century, as at Syon Abbey: Vincent Gillespie and A. I. Doyle, eds., *Syon Abbey with the Libraries of the Carthusians: Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues 9*, *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues* (London: The British Library, 2001), 213. It is difficult to know if the text had much influence on the tastes of local English authors, but it is clear that illustrated manuals on military strategy and technology were not common before the late sixteenth century: See the hand-list of early English printed texts in Maurice J. D. Cockle, *A Bibliography of English Military Books up to 1642 and of Contemporary Foreign Works* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co., 1900), and the discussion of early military illustration in Michael West, "Spenser's Art of War: Chivalric Allegory, Military Technology, and the Elizabethan Mock-Heroic Sensibility," *Renaissance Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (1988): 654-704.
- <sup>76</sup> The two German manuals often used for this comparison are Hs 3227a and Köln, Stadt Historischen Archives, W\* 150. There is no published edition of Hs 3227a, although there is a translation of the fight-text available online, Peter Lindholm, trans., "Cod. HS 3227a or Hanko Dobringer fechtbuch from 1389", 2005, [www.thearma.org/Manuals/Dobringer\\_A5\\_sidebyside.pdf](http://www.thearma.org/Manuals/Dobringer_A5_sidebyside.pdf). There is a facsimile and transcription of the Köln manuscript in Matthias Johannes Bauer, *Langes Schwert und Schweinespiess: Die Anonyme Fechthandschrift aus den Verschütteten Beständen des historischen Archivs der Stadt Köln* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 2009).
- <sup>77</sup> This analogy (made without direct reference to the previous arguments over the relationships of martial skill to science) was by Ann Chamberlain, "Mittelalterliche Kampfweisen: Das Lange Schwert (Book Review)," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 40, no. 4 (2009): 1315-1316.

at all. The relevant part of the debate for the study of Middle English fight-texts is how the division between rational and practical knowledge (*scientia* and *experientia*) influenced text production. As noted before, these divisions had a substantial grey area and were not a perfectly clean points of separation.

A significant part of the arguments over classifications of knowledge concerns the nature of physical action or *techné*, the manipulation of material and objects, and the act of manual labour. William Caxton's translation of Gossouin's *Image du Monde*, printed in 1480, captures the popular understanding of these divisions between the rational and the practical, the intellectual, and the physical. The liberal arts are defined by their relationship to material and immaterial products. Perhaps surprising for the modern reader medicine, or "phisyque" is not part of the liberal sciences "ffor it serueth to hele mannes body," and is more a craft or mechanical art:<sup>78</sup>

And ther is nothyng liberal ne free that groweth of therthe; and for as moche as science that serueth to mannes body leseth his franchise, but science that serueth to the soule deserueth in the world to haue name liberal; ffor the sowle ought to be liberal as thyng that is of noble beyng, as she that cometh of God, and to God wille and ought retorne; and therfor ben the vii sciences liberall, ffor they make the soule all free.<sup>79</sup>

This is a modification of the Aristotelian model of knowledge where the physical and practical are fundamentally different from the philosophical. Humanism, working largely within mathematics, alchemy, chemistry, astronomy, and other fields both philosophical and practical, slowly altered this division, not by elevating the physical or devaluing the philosophical but by changing the general points of reference by which these forms of knowledge were judged.<sup>80</sup> But

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<sup>78</sup> These passages are transcribed from William Caxton, *Caxton's Mirror of the World*, ed. Oliver H. Prior (London: Early English Text Society, 1913), 38.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-39.

<sup>80</sup> This process of rehabilitation and evaluation of physical action began before the Humanists: See John Van Engen, "Theophilus Presbyter and Rupert of Deutz: The Manual Arts and Benedictine Theology in the Early Twelfth

the English fight-texts pre-date the Humanist re-evaluation of physical action. They are products of a medieval world order where *techné* was kept apart from the rational sciences in thought, even if they occasionally came together in text.

Hester's argument is that fight-texts found in collections of alchemical material is evidence that "to the medieval mind, swordplay was likely ranked among [the sciences] by virtue of its equally methodological processes of experimentation and innovation, justifying its place in the greater context of medieval scientific miscellanies."<sup>81</sup> However, this is an anachrosism, although only a small one. Fight-texts produced in later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reflect the changing Humanist values for practical knowledge. The Middle English texts, and the Harley manuscript in particular, are still too much a part of the medieval order of knowledge to make such an association. If we avoid making judgements based on a modern understanding of experimental science, we find that the affinity with alchemical, medical, and technical topics that share space with martial instruction, is much more practical and less intellectual. The connection between these topics is more through shared text strategies and an educated reader.

This lengthy digression on mnemonics, verse poetry, and the medieval classifications of knowledge serves to show how peculiar the English fight-texts are and how few similarities they have with other martial writing. The Middle English fight-texts share many traits with contemporary English recipe literature but even then, these similarities are limited. Recipe texts will at least tell the reader what the list of ingredients will make, even if it assumes the reader knows what the ingredients are and how to prepare them. These fight-texts lack even these basic

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Century," *Viator* 11, no. 11 (1980): 147-163. Humanism and the shifting benchmark of intellectual values is discussed in Adrian Johns, "History, Science, and the History of the Book: the Making of Natural Philosophy in Early Modern England," *Publishing History*, no. 30 (1991): 5-30.

<sup>81</sup> Hester, "Real Men Read Poetry," 182.

structures of organization. The only other English texts bear any resemblance to this particular approach to martial instruction is dance choreography. The first manuscripts of English dance choreography are contemporary with the fight-texts, and the two genres share many features. Middle English dance choreography also shares some vocabulary. More importantly they both share the same problems for adapting oral and aural instruction. Problems that recipe literature is unable to solve.

This chapter focused on the text strategies used in the Middle English manuscripts through comparison with technical and procedural writing and in contrast to the German and Italian fight-books. This shows that the English writers chose a very different approach to martial instruction than their Continental counterparts, an approach modelled in part on the recipe and process literature familiar to the literate and Latinate writers of the fifteenth century. The similarities between the Harley verse section and the Liechtenaur *Merkversen* appears to be superficial, there is no evidence of shared ideas about martial pedagogy with German contemporaries. Mnemonic strategies are varied in the Middle English corpus of practical writing and not all verse texts use mnemonics. It is also apparent that the significance attached to fight-texts found in collections of scientific and alchemical writing is unclear. There is little evidence to suggest that the martial texts were included in collections of scientific material because they were thought of as knowledge with equal value. Elite and educated readers had common interests in the technical and practical applications of the sciences and for martial skill, but the significance of finding this material in collections is based more on their textual style than their intellectual value.

The final chapter will look at English dance instruction and their relationship to the fight-texts. The significance of the oral and aural similarities in dance and martial instruction is an important key understanding why the English fight-texts take the shape they do. It also helps

explain why their authors chose similar strategies. Both dance and combat have the added dimension of complex physical action and the models for orality and textuality suggested by Gellrich can only explain some of the features of adaptation to text. Chapter three will discuss some studies of dance and physical cognition where they are able to help explain the Middle English fight-texts.

## Chapter 3

### ***...and att yowr stoppe: English dance choreography, and shared vocabularies***

The idea that dance and martial arts might share some common ground is not new. Sydney Anglo pointed out that early dance instructions, like fight-texts, focus on the "naming and illustrating of certain key postures which may then be grouped in various sequences and at different tempi."<sup>1</sup> Scholars have noticed other similarities between dance and martial culture, particularly in the seventeenth century and developments in drills for soldiers and marching patterns for distributing them on the battlefield. This is a different kind of drill from that used in the Middle English fight-texts but it draws much of its focus on order, and timed movement from large group dance styles.<sup>2</sup> These military developments coincided with changing tastes for geometric dance choreography, new aesthetics in architecture, and gardening.<sup>3</sup> Anglo argues that sixteenth and seventeenth-century court culture had a significant effect on the perception of martial skill. Court culture, with its increasing interest in grace and comportment, changed how an audience judged tournament participants.<sup>4</sup> However, like Humanism and the changing ideas

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<sup>1</sup> In this quote Anglo is discussing illustrated texts, but prose manuals in martial skill, and dance, appear at roughly the same time but in different places. *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, 44. For a brief history of dance instruction in the same period, see Jennifer Nevile, "Dance in Europe 1250-1750," in *Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politick, 1250-1750*, ed. Jennifer Nevile (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 2008), 7-64.

<sup>2</sup> Large scale military drill formations and their relationship to dance is discussed at length in William McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1995). Shorter studies of drill in military history appear in Gunther E. Rothenberg, "Maurice of Nassau, Gustav Adolphus, Raimondo Montecuccoli, and the 'Military Revolution' of the Seventeenth Century," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 32-63, and Richard Preston, Alex Roland, and Sydney F. Wise, *Men in Arms: A History of Warfare and its Interrelationships with Western Society*, 5th ed. (Fort Worth: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1991), 86-103.

<sup>3</sup> See the creative, and challenging, essay by Harald Kleinschmidt, "The Military and Dancing: Changing Norms and Behaviour, 15th to 18th Century," *Ethnologia Europaea* 25, no. 2 (1995): 157-176. See also the detailed study of French tastes in dance, music, and elite culture; Kate Van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms in Early Modern France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Anglo focused on literature that advised tournament participants in foot combat at barriers. This was a specialized performance that increasingly lost its martial aspect over time. By the seventeenth century the audience judged participants on their grace and bearing, not their success or prowess in arms. Sydney Anglo, "The Barriers: From Combat to Dance (Almost)," *Dance Research* 25 (2007): 91-106.



about knowledge, the Middle English fight-texts, and their contemporary dance choreographies pre-date these developments, but they were still part of a medieval world view that considered arms and dance as related activities. The various arguments in favour of dance as a legitimate and useful activity resemble arguments in favour of martial prowess.

The late medieval association of martial prowess with dance was concerned with moral values and not pedagogy, but it shows how the two are bound together in the minds of medieval practitioners. Many arguments in support of dance as a morally valid activity are made by the same promoters of chivalric virtue. Geoffroi de Charny writes in his fourteenth-century *Livre de chivalerie* that dance was among "the finest games and pastimes" suitable for any good man-at-arms.<sup>5</sup> The criticism of dance had more to do with its association with other dishonourable behaviour such as gambling and disreputable company. Charny argued against the association of dance with moral weakness because some of his readers continued to hold that negative view. England's Edward II was thought a weak and ineffectual ruler because "of his liking for actors and dancers" and for "others who practice mechanical arts."<sup>6</sup> By the sixteenth century the value of prowess — and the way it was measured — had changed; the relationship with dance grew closer. Baldesar Castiglione made an argument in favour of dance that is little different from Charny's, and the one he uses favour of skill with arms. Prowess gained through the use of weapons was, for Castiglione, as great a measure of a courtier's value as his ability to dance with effortlessness and grace.<sup>7</sup> Dance, as with arms, became an important means of exhibiting

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<sup>5</sup> Richard W. Kaeuper and Elspeth Kennedy, *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny: Text, Context, and Translation*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 113.

<sup>6</sup> Malcolm Vale, "Ritual, Ceremony and the 'Civilising Process': The Role of the Court, c. 1270-1400," in *The Court as Stage: England and the Low Countries in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Steven Gunn and Antheun Janse (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), 25.

<sup>7</sup> Castiglione, 70. Castiglione's *Cortegiano* was available in French and Italian versions for the English audience from the 1530s and it was introduced to the monolingual English reader in 1561. Its influence on English elite

gentlemanly honour; it was a new way for early modern elites to show prowess and privileged knowledge and skill.<sup>8</sup>

These shared values for dance and skill in arms give us some basis to study the two as related bodies of knowledge. Our goal is to understand why the first English fight-texts take their particular pedagogical approach and that is assisted through this comparison with dance texts because of other, more important, shared values. Dance, like combat, is a physical action but it is not exactly *techné*. Craft and recipe literature, which reduce actions to lists and sequences also work with ingredients and tools and usually aim to produce a product or a tangible result. Dance and combat are performance, there is no product to produce, no material is manipulated in their actions. This is the important link in pedagogy between dance and combat. Prior to the fifteenth century dance and arms were taught without the aid of text. Adapting that form of instruction to text is far more complex than adapting discourse and the English dance choreographies and fight-texts tackle that problem in the same way.

### **A fight is like a dance with a hostile partner**

Ann Hutchinson Guest's description of the goals of dance instruction are essentially identical to that of combat:

The process of dance notation requires reducing four-dimensional movement (time

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and middle class society is covered in detail in Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (New York: Polity, 1995).

<sup>8</sup> See Jennifer Nevile, "Dance Performance in the Late Middle Ages: a Contested Space," in *Visualizing Medieval Performance: Perspectives, Histories, Contexts*, ed. Elina Gertsman (Aldershot, Hants.: Ashgate, 2008), 295-310, and *The Eloquent Body: Dance and Humanist Culture in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 2004). See also Van Orden, and the explicit example of Fabritio Caroso, who refers to dance as an art, but art "adapted to the fundamental law and made perfect in theory": *Courtly Dance of the Renaissance: a New Translation and Edition of the Nobiltà di Dame (1600)*, trans. Julia Sutton (New York: Dover Publications, 1995), 89.

being the fourth dimension) to a two-dimensional surface. The parts of the body have to be defined, as does the form of movement involved (flexion, extension, rotation, directional placement) and the duration of each in relation to the overall time structure[...] In a dance score each performer is like a small orchestra — arms, legs, head, torso, etc. in motion[...]<sup>9</sup>

Few dance or fight-texts approach this level of complexity until well after the seventeenth century. Combat has the added complication that Guest's dance texts never have to worry about. The fighter, unlike the dancer, must shape his own choreography through observation, adaptation, and improvisation. This is only possible if the fighter has developed a deep knowledge of martial techniques. The fighter used this knowledge to shape his "performance" in hopes of avoiding injury and to gain victory. The fencer and academic Patri J. Pugliese described this dichotomy between dance and combat another way:

[I]n dancing, you and your partner attempt to accommodate your movements to each other; in fencing, you and your opponent are intent on discommoding the actions of the other, or at least precluding his or her intended final action (be it cut or thrust). [...] In fencing, while you may learn movements in a set pattern, you must be sure not to execute them in a pattern lest your opponent be able to anticipate your actions.<sup>10</sup>

For Pugliese the parallel rests partly in the shared audience of elite consumers of dance and martial skill but also in the "requirements of disciplined movement common" to dance and combat.<sup>11</sup>

Fight-texts struggle to account for the unpredictable nature of real combat. Fencing masters and fight-text authors were not above making claims of completeness, but the challenge

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<sup>9</sup> Ann Hutchinson Guest, "Dance Notation," *Perspecta* 26 (1990), 203.

<sup>10</sup> Dr. Pugliese had discussed the links between late sixteenth century dance instruction and fencing manuals at various conferences but only committed his ideas to paper for publication recently: Patri J. Pugliese, "Parallels Between Fencing and Dancing in Late Sixteenth Century Treatises" (2005), [www.umass.edu/renaissance/lord/pdfs/Parallels.pdf](http://www.umass.edu/renaissance/lord/pdfs/Parallels.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

of accounting for the unpredictability of combat was a constant motivation for the improvement of fight-texts.<sup>12</sup> Those complex systems for combining and re-ordering illustrations, and the use of the "if-then" structure were popular attempts to account for this inherent complexity.

Liechtenauer's mnemonic verses were yet another variation on this theme of adaptation and improvisation. However, these pedagogical techniques were of limited value, especially for the beginner. No fight can be reduced to choreography, but some parts of basic training can.

Choreography, as a system of training, is a much simpler approach to using text instruction, at least in comparison with the alternatives.

It is difficult to find obvious links between dance choreography and the development of the German, Italian, or French manuscript fight-texts. Germany did not produce dance literature until the seventeenth century and they approach physical instruction independently. Italian dance literature does appear in the sixteenth century but they resemble French styles of dance instruction, not the illustrated manuals of combat.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, Middle English dance and fight-texts use the same text strategies and a very similar vocabulary. It is not possible to determine which came first — English procedural texts of dance or combat instruction — both appear around the same time as part of the same cultural and literary movements at work across Europe. In this way they are also the products of the same discourse community and were shaped by the same textual influences that guided adaptations of oral knowledge to text.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Fight-texts often contain claims to the text's ability to teach and to efficacy of the techniques but as the complexity of the instructions increased and the more overt references to science and mathematics, authors made more bold claims to certainty. See Anglo, *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, 72-90.

<sup>13</sup> Nevile, "Dance in Europe 1250-1750."

<sup>14</sup> The Harley and Titus texts, as products of the early and mid-fifteenth century, predate the earliest English dance choreography, but this period does not see rapid changes in text production and reading tastes until well into the late sixteenth century. For this reason one can safely make some generalizations about these texts and consider them as part of a related movement in text production.

According to Jennifer Nevile dance "was seen more as a physical skill than a written one, and it was not considered necessary to be able to write about dance in anything other than general, descriptive terms."<sup>15</sup> The same was likely true in relation to martial skill. The way Nevile writes about dance could just as easily apply to the history of late medieval martial arts:

Up until the fifteenth century dance instruction had presumably been an oral practice, with courtiers learning new dances directly from those most skilled. Teachers of dance seem to have been uninterested in committing their choreographies to paper, whether to produce instructional manuals outlining the basic steps and principles of the dance style or to produce treatises on dance as a gift to their patrons.<sup>16</sup>

The earliest adaptations of dance instruction to text appear in Italian and French sources from the fifteenth century. Italian dance manuals typically "contain a large number of choreographic descriptions," and some musical scores. They also contain "philosophical justifications for dancing, list the principles necessary for a good dance, and briefly describe the steps used."<sup>17</sup> The French sources focus on choreographies and give little in the way of definitions or philosophical context.<sup>18</sup>

Part of the motivation to adapt oral instruction to text, mentioned in the last chapter, was the growing literate audience who wanted to learn from books. This development was tied to the growth of a middle-class, the appeal of books as objects of curiosity and status, and greater demand for text based instruction in craft and commercial skills for a population of artisans who could not be accommodated by the master and apprentice structures.<sup>19</sup> William Eamon's study of early modern reading and book production makes this argument for the appearance of practical

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<sup>15</sup> Nevile, "Dance in Europe 1250-1750," 16-17.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 7

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>19</sup> Eisenstein, 38.

texts but he is also aware that books were not always bought for pragmatic reasons.<sup>20</sup> How books were read and used is just as important as how they were collected, shown, and spoken of. This is part of the "sociology of the texts" and readers.<sup>21</sup>

Dance may not have enjoyed a place in the Aristotelian categories of human knowledge but it enjoyed an elevated status anyway. Juan de Esquivel Navarro, writing in the early seventeenth century, but preserving earlier sentiments, placed dance alongside fencing and other physical and intellectual pursuits in the curricula for the gentleman and gentlewoman: "Not only should one frequent the studios in order to know how to dance, but also to learn politeness, fine dress, modesty, fine speech, and to be competent in many subjects; because in the studios, when there is no dancing, there is talk about fencing expertise, Latin, philosophy, and all the other skills which men of good taste profess."<sup>22</sup> Here, dance and martial skill share the same social status, independent of its intellectual value, at least in the imagination is its privileged practitioners. It is important to remember that this conception of dance and martial skill as valuable knowledge was largely independent from the influences that shaped authorial choices.

In the sixteenth century there was a "flourishing culture of music and dance at the English court" and the earliest choreographies date from the early Tudor period.<sup>23</sup> One short manuscript

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<sup>20</sup> The first wave of technical writing that Eamon studies, the *Künstbuchlein*, were certainly popular with artisans and others who had practical reasons for owning them. However, the books of the *professorini di secreti* (professors of secrets) were aimed at a much wider audience more interested in ownership of special knowledge than practical application. Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, 124-125. 234-259.

<sup>21</sup> There is a good discussion of these complex interactions, as well as a description of the "sociology of texts" in Roger Chartier, *Inscription and Erasure: literature and Written Culture from the Eleventh to the Eighteenth Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), i-xiii. Changing tastes in literacy and fashion are discussed in Alison Truelove, "Literacy," in *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England*, ed. Raluca Radulescu and Alison Truelove (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 84-99.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Nevile, "Dance in Europe, 1250-1750," 16. The changing value of dance as an elite social measure is discussed in Nevile, "Dance Performance in the Late Middle Ages: A Contested Space."

<sup>23</sup> Jennifer Nevile, "Dance in Early Tudor England: an Italian Connection?," *Early Music* 26, no. 2 (1998), 231.

collection of dance choreographies, probably the earliest survival, was copied onto the flyleaf of a 1497 printed text now in the collection of Salisbury Cathedral.<sup>24</sup> This collection uses a form of symbolic notation that is still procedural but is more like a mathematical formula. The notes were copied on the most convenient blank piece of paper available — a flyleaf in a printed text whose content was unrelated to the notes it contains.<sup>25</sup> Frederick Crane suggests the Salisbury notations were copied down around 1500, in three separate hands and survives because the print volume was valuable and was preserved in an institutional collection.<sup>26</sup> A more lengthy set of prose choreographies is preserved in a small commonplace book dated to 1500 and now part of the Gresley manuscript collection in the Derbyshire County Archives.<sup>27</sup> A considerable number of dance choreographies, using the same prose strategy, survive from the later sixteenth and early seventeenth century in manuscripts from the Inns of Court.<sup>28</sup> None of these texts are presentation copies, and like the fight-texts, are products of private scribal activity for private use.

The context for the creation of the English dance manuscripts is similar to those of the fight-texts. Fallows suggests that the Gresley commonplace book was the work of "Johanes Banis," likely a secretary to the Shirley family of Derbyshire.<sup>29</sup> The collection contains Latin texts on chiromancy (palm reading), physiognomy, and a set of Latin prayers "most likely from the

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<sup>24</sup> This is the Salisbury Cathedral's copy of Johannes Balbus de Janua, *Catholicon* (Venice: Johannes Hamann, 1497).

<sup>25</sup> There is ample evidence for the use of blank space in early printed books as a kind of temporary notebook by owners and this is an excellent example of the practice: See a discussion of this practice in William Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 59.

<sup>26</sup> Crane, 24-25.

<sup>27</sup> The commonplace book is Derbyshire Record Office, D77 box 38. pp 51-79. For discussion and transcriptions see Jennifer Nevile, "Dance Steps and Music in the Gresley Manuscript," *Historical Dance* 3, no. 6 (1999): 2-19, and Fallows, "The Gresley Dance Collection, c.1500."

<sup>28</sup> Wilson, "Dancing in the Inns of Court."

<sup>29</sup> Fallows, 2-3.

liturgy."<sup>30</sup> We have already seen how the choices surrounding collections can influence modern readers ideas about intellectual value. But, like the fight-texts, dance choreographies appear in collections that are related in general terms through a shared approach to procedural and mechanical knowledge, a learned reader interested in private study.<sup>31</sup>

An excerpt from David Fallows transcription of the Gresley text demonstrates just how similar the text strategy is to fight-instruction.

thre syngils and thre rakkys and a stop and torne. Then the first 3 syngils and three retrettes; | the 2de the same tyme. The 2de thre singlis and three retrettes; the first eqt the same tym.<sup>32</sup>

[three *singles* and three *rakes* and a stop and turn. Then the first 3 singles and three retreats; the 2nd (in) the same time. The 2nd three singles and three retreats; the first (at?) the same time.]

This is an identical peritactical strategy with the same linear structure of nouns, verbs, adjectives and conjunctions used in recipes and fight-texts. Likewise, terms, such as *syngils*, *rakkys*, and *retrettes*, are left un-glossed on the assumption that the reader knows their meaning. There are no general guidelines for the performer, and no conceptual or philosophical rules that govern dance. These choreographies generally provide instruction for two participants, referred in the text as the first and second, but only the discrete movements of each dancer are listed, and nothing else is

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 2. There is little space here for a discussion of commonplace books and the study of their creation. The issues are largely those discussed in the previous chapter, but for more detail see Martha W. Driver, "When is a Miscellany Not Miscellaneous? Making Sense of the Kalender of Shepherds," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003): 199-214, Andrew Taylor, "Manual to Miscellany: Stages in the Commercial Copying of Vernacular Literature in England," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003): 1-17, Carrie Griffin, "The 'Wagstaff Miscellany': Compilation, Organization and Identity in the Book of John Whittocksmead," in *Transmission and Transformation in the Middle Ages: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Kathy Cawsey and Jason Harris (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), and Fred Schurink, "Manuscript Commonplace Books, Literature, and Reading in Early Modern England," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2010): 453-469.

<sup>31</sup> The same can be said of other sixteenth and seventeenth-century dance choreographies transcribed by Wilson, "Dancing in the Inns of Court." These choreographies are collected in commonplace volumes that have few thematic trends.

<sup>32</sup> Fallows, 11. Fallows only transcribes the text, the translation is mine.



explained about the movements or their particular form. Later examples taken from manuscripts at the Inns of Court exhibit the same pedagogical system.

ij Singles and a duple Forward / ij singles syde  
reprynce backe<sup>33</sup>

[2 *singles* and a *double* forward. 2 *singles*, a side-  
reprise back.]

English dance choreography appears to have used this approach to instruction well into the seventeenth century, long after the English works on combat adopted continental styles. This linear system, while popular with the early English writers, has its limitations for teaching dance. These early dance texts do not adapt well to large numbers of dancers, particularly for with complex group choreographies.<sup>34</sup> Symbolic and diagrammatic notation eventually replaced prose as the preferred style of instruction in the late seventeenth century as it could better cope with multiple dancers and gave more explicit instruction for footwork.<sup>35</sup>

Where vocabulary is concerned, scholars of dance have a major advantage over the scholars of fight-texts. Dance instruction has a much smaller vocabulary than combat, and there are additional points of reference and comparison within this genre that assist interpretation. Dance scholars are able to identify the same dances in different languages and are able to track regional adaptations of vernacular dance vocabulary. The same can be done with some of the German and Italian fight-texts but, because of the drastically different styles of instruction, the

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<sup>33</sup> This choreography is from Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson Poet 108, transcribed in Wilson, "Dancing in the Inns of Court," 3. The translation is mine.

<sup>34</sup> Another connection between fight-texts and dance notation is their modern following of scholars and enthusiasts interested in reconstructing them. This is a much easier process than re-constructing martial techniques but it is still fraught with peril, David R. Wilson, "Performing the Gresley Dances: The View From the Floor," *Historical Dance* 3, no. 6 (1999): 29-32.

<sup>35</sup> See Guest, 204-210.

same can not be done with English martial texts. It also helps that most of the early dance literature focuses entirely on footwork with occasional measure of time and rhythm. Nevile and Wilson can safely read the *singlis* in the Gresley manuscripts as the English equivalent of the French *semibreve* — a step measured by one beat in the music that moves the feet with a left-right-left movement. The same applies for definitions of *doblis*, *trete*, *retrete*, and *rakis*.<sup>36</sup> The directional meaning of the instruction is less clear, and is usually understood by context and by the place and sequence of the words. Because these choreographies often apply to a pair of dancers, the movements can be re-constructed by imagining the relationship between the dancers and constructing a likely presentation.

The claim that the dance vocabulary is likely, or at least in part, the same as that found in the fight-texts is further supported by works that tell us what English readers knew about dance and its terminology in the early sixteenth century. English elites and the aspiring gentry were already familiar with the French dance vocabulary, as is shown by a Thomas Elyot's 1531 *The booke named the Governour*, which includes descriptions of dance steps and their French names.<sup>37</sup> Elyot explains the steps as part of an allegorical discussion of prudence, which is a handy way of explaining the rudiments of dance while arguing in support of the moral value of dance.<sup>38</sup> Elyot's work builds on an earlier text printed in 1521 that translated a set of French dances and provided similar definitions of terms and steps as part of a lesson plan for the French language, and used an English vocabulary similar to that of the fight-texts.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Nevile, "Dance Steps and Music" Wilson, "Performing the Gresley Dances."

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Elyot, *The booke named the governour devised by Thomas Elyot knight* (London: Tho. Bertheleti, 1531). Elyot's dance instructions are transcribed in Frederick Crane, *Materials for the Study of the Fifteenth Century Basse Danse*, vol. xvi, Musicological Studies (New York: The Institute of Mediæval Music, 1968), 38-39.

<sup>38</sup> Elyot writes that the *single* "is of two vnities separte in pasinge forward:" essentially the same meaning of the term given by Nevile. Elyot, 81-82.

<sup>39</sup> See a discussion in Ward, "The Maner of Dauncying," 127-8. The book mentioned by Ward is Alexander Barclay,

The shared vocabulary noticed between the dance and fight texts is not such a perfect match, and this has much to do with the context specific use of shared terms. Nevile interprets *rakis*, as a diagonal movement of the feet and measured by the number of steps and modified by other directional terms for each choreography.<sup>40</sup> A dancer who is instructed to "retrett and rake" might have been a diagonal backwards *single*.<sup>41</sup> If one applies this meaning for "rake" in the Additional and Titus texts it seems to fit, but it appears in slightly different grammatical positions from dance. It may be that the terms found in both dance and fight-texts mean roughly the same thing but are modified in different ways. In combat a *rake* may have been a diagonal movement of the body, or a general direction for a sequence of movements roughly similar to their dance counterpart. There is also the issue of time and measure. Dance is matched to music in time and measure and the readers of the dance notation would have made that connection through performance. Fight-texts lack this musical connection but time and measure are important aspects of combat. Most of the early illustrated manuals avoid this issue as it was one of the more difficult concepts to record. This, perhaps, is the key to understanding the function of *quarter*, *half*, and the other terms that jumble together around the *haukes*, *rakis*, and other actions.

If we understand some of the fight-instruction as having the same meaning as terms in dance notation, we can parse some of that instruction better, but there is still the issue of what words are acting as adjectives or nouns and whether one word means the same thing in different combinations or in different contexts. We can apply new reading to some examples as in the following passage from Additional. The translation attempts to integrate the alternate meanings

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*The introductory to wryte and to pronounce Frenche* (London: Robert Coplande, 1521).

<sup>40</sup> Nevile, "Dance Steps and Music," 5.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 9. Nevile provides diagrammatic choreography in this article.

of terms found in dance choreography:

A dowble rownde wyth a bake foyne and a *quarter* lythly delyveryde/<sup>42</sup>

[A double step (with, or in, a) *round*, with a back thrust, and a *quarter* *lightly* delivered...]

We are still left to struggle with some of the vocabulary, but the actions are easier to parse if one assumes that some of the terms likely correspond to usage in dance texts. Another example taken from Titus demonstrates the potential for cross reference of vocabulary:

A dowbull rownde a dowbyll rake with an awke  
A *quarter* & a rake & a wype with a spryng vydyng<sup>43</sup>

[A double step (in, or with, a) *rownde*, a double diagonal step, with a thrust  
A *quarter* & a diagonal & a *wipe* with a spring *vodyng* (retreating)]

Obviously, the dance choreography does not exactly crack the code, but it suggests where parts of the drills may refer to specific footwork. There remains the questions about why English writers chose these particular strategies over others and the models for orality and textuality are a partial help.

Gellrich's model for late developing textuality is based on a straightforward premise that any author of new, text-based, knowledge will draw inspiration from the oral roots of the subject and will incorporate them into existing text-based strategies. Procedural instruction has limited options for text based communication, particularly for complex physical action. Sydney Anglo's work shows just how long it took writers of fencing treatises to agree on a functional balance of practical and theoretical instruction, illustrations, diagrams and exercises.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Additional, line 34.

<sup>43</sup> Titus, lines 3-4.

<sup>44</sup> Anglo, *Renaissance Martial Arts*.

Unfortunately, models of adaptation from orality to text focus on dialogue and spoken communication and there is a substantial role for physical instruction, demonstration, and mimicry. Students of arms use their eyes as much as their ears when learning technique. This is well attested in studies of cognitive sciences, particularly for physical activities like dance and sport. When observed from the perspective of physical education, medieval fight-texts tend to provide instruction for a reader already at the final stages of "the acquisition of motor skill." At this level instruction focuses on giving the student "creative insight into the structure of the movement."<sup>45</sup> This is vital knowledge for the advanced student who already knows the basics of his art. Dance notation, like musical notation, can be reduced to a text that presents a structured and choreographed performance for the reader and student, but fight-texts can only reduce their instructions so far.

We can imagine a kind of scale of complexity in procedural instruction and their texts. The scale begins with the simplest, where texts can contain the entirety of knowledge needed for the reader and moves on to the other extreme where the text can only supplement instruction, but can never replace it entirely. At the one extreme we have music notation which, in its late medieval form, can be considered its own kind of performance preserved in text. The reader of musical notation who knows the meaning of the symbols, does not need to play perform the music to know what it will sound like.<sup>46</sup> Next is medical and alchemical recipe literature that describes instructions and lists actions, measures, and ingredients, in a sequence for the reader can follow, assuming they know the basic principles governing medicine, cooking or alchemy.

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<sup>45</sup> Fügedi, 395, 397.

<sup>46</sup> The analogy of music notation as its own form of performance is discussed in Leo Treitler, "Oral, Written, and Literate Process in the Transmission of Medieval Music," *Speculum* 56, no. 3 (1981): 471-491.

Dance notation has the added complexity and dimensions, both physically and in time which make texts of instruction more complex or more incomplete. Fight-instruction is the most complex and challenging form of procedural knowledge, and most texts avoid the basics and concentrate on the theoretical and conceptual knowledge that the advanced practitioner can understand most readily. Basic instruction in the use of arms is least suited to text because of the essential need of the student to know and understand martial action from direct observation, imitation, correction by example, and repetitive practice.

Although English dance and martial instruction appear to share some vocabulary and a common text strategy, it is difficult to know how they progressed to text. The similarities suggest shared oral roots for instruction but the extra-oral aspects did not adapt easily to text, but since the two topics appear in text in much the same way it also suggests that they shared many extra-oral elements. We are at a loss, at this stage of scholarly understanding of orality and textuality, to know much more about this process. Dance and skill in arms shared the same audience and English writers began to adapt both to text at the same time and appear to have followed similar steps. This process occurred largely in isolation from the continental strategies for texts on combat and dance. By the late sixteenth century, England lost its unique taste for martial instruction and began to follow a style of instruction influenced heavily by Italian models.

### **Conclusion:**

*... & lete **þy** eye **þy** foete & **þy** honde a corde in **þy** defence*

It is difficult to know how successful the English writers were in these first attempts to move martial instruction onto paper. The scarcity of survivals is not as suggestive of failure as it may seem. These texts were certainly ephemeral, temporal and personal in nature and there was

little reason for readers to keep drills in collections once they had committed them to physical memory. Later readers would have had no use for these texts if they were not in training or knew all the various definitions and guiding principles. However, equally temporary, personal and disposable manuscripts survive in far greater numbers than English fight-texts or even dance choreography.<sup>47</sup> The low number of survivals of English fight-drills may be that they were never very popular with readers in the first place, or students of arms were unlikely to record these instructions on a regular basis.

As difficult as it is to account for the appearance of these texts it is somewhat easier to explain what replaced them. English fashions for learned violence changed quickly in the late sixteenth century with the adoption of the specialized weapons of the duel, and the changing focus from battle-field prowess to courtly valour. Print editions of Italian, French, and Spanish fencing texts were imported to England at the beginning of the sixteenth century along with texts of courtly manners, duelling etiquette, and popular romance literature.<sup>48</sup> Italian literature, particularly the books of secrets, were very popular and had a considerable influence on the domestic publishing industry. At this stage, the English environment more closely resembles William Eamon's studies of popular reading.<sup>49</sup> Dedicated fencing treatises, produced in England, did not appear until the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

It is no surprise that the first two fencing books in English lack any links to the manuscript texts studied here; one was a translation from the Italian, the other a ghost written

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<sup>47</sup> For example see Don Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* (University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

<sup>48</sup> See Anglo, "How to Kill a Man at Your Ease," and Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness and Honour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>49</sup> Italian texts, and their influence on European readers, is discussed in Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, 267-318.

manual from an Italian master teaching in London.<sup>50</sup> The first fencing manual from a native English author was produced as a response to the foreign masters.<sup>51</sup> Silver did not produce an exclusive treatise on English swordsmanship, but something of a polemic against European styles that he considered dangerous. Despite Silver's Anglo-centrism his text shows the influence of French and Italian language and textual strategies and there are no links through pedagogy or vocabulary to the English manuscript corpus. English fight-instruction, as it was first presented in the manuscripts, could not compete with the changing fashions for continental weapons and the discourse of learned violence.

Historians would do well to remember David Gary Shaw's warning that begins his study of medieval social networks: "Eager for details, historians sometimes rely too much on the extraordinary survival."<sup>52</sup> This thesis is a long study of three short texts, and of all the arguments given here the safest conclusion is that the Harley, Titus, and Additional manuscripts are, indeed, extraordinary survivals of a unique late medieval approach to martial knowledge. These manuscripts show all the features of a genre that was created almost entirely in isolation from

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<sup>50</sup> These are Giacomo di Grassi, *Giacomo di Grassi his True arte of defence plainlie teaching...* (London: [G. Shaw], 1594), and Vincentio Saviolo, *Vincentio Saviolo his practise In two bookes...* (London: Thomas Scarlet for John Wolf, 1595). The di Grassi text is a translation of his 1571 text printed in Venice. Saviolo's manual is part original treatise and part adaptation of a previously published book on duelling etiquette, neither of which were likely the work of Saviolo himself, being ghost written by John Florio. See Sergio Rossi, "Vincentio Saviolo his Practice (1595): A Problem of Authorship," in *England and the Continental Renaissance: Essays in Honour of J. B. Trapp*, ed. Edward. Chaney and Peter Mack (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1990), 165-175.

<sup>51</sup> The text is George Silver, *Paradoxes of Defence ...* (London: Edward Blount, 1599). The quotation is from George Silver, *The Works of George Silver*, ed. Cyril G. R. Matthey (London: George Bell and Sons, 1898), 3. Silver came from a gentry family and may have died on campaign in Ireland in services to the forces of the Earl of Essex, the patron of his book. Stephen Wright, "Silver, George (fl. 1580-1599), Swordsman and Writer on Fencing," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004. Heslop and Bradak incorrectly name Silver as a member of the Masters of defence of London, a guild of authorized fencing masters, *Lessons on the English Longsword*, 21. He is not listed in the guild's records published in Berry Herbert, *The Noble Science: A Study and Transcription of Sloane Ms. 2530, Papers of the Masters of Defence of London, Temp. Henry VIII to 1590* (Newark, Del.: University of Delaware Press, 1991). It is not clear from Silver's writing if he had a school of defence in London or if he was just a concerned practitioner.

<sup>52</sup> David Gary Shaw, *Necessary Conjunctions: The Social Self in Medieval England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 5.



continental contemporaries. Their strangeness has isolated them further from modern scholarship on martial arts and military culture.

We have seen how various factors influenced choices made by authors of fight-texts, choices that differ regionally between English, German, and Italian examples. The factors that influenced the authors of the English dance and fight-texts appear to come in part, from the recipe literature most familiar to the compilers of commonplace collections of practical writing. English dance and combat manuscripts seem to have shared similar oral roots and their authors adapted a shared vocabulary. These texts also shared the same audience, and very likely, share authors with the same social, cultural, and intellectual ideas, about their art and craft. These texts were likely not produced by exactly the same people, as there are few instances of that kind of polyglot master even in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century.<sup>53</sup>

Medieval debates over place of technical and practical knowledge in the hierarchy of wisdom also shaped how writers and readers thought of martial skill and the form it should take in text. English authors attempted to fit the procedural, physical, knowledge of combat and dance into the text strategies already popular in recipe literature and practical verse. These texts appear to share traits with their German counterparts only in the broadest way. They shared a learned, and often elite, audience or they adopted a similar practical approach to technical and procedural knowledge. The Middle English fight-texts appear as they do because their authors based their approach to textual knowledge on existing Middle English material, both technical and literary, and they chose to encode in text a different stage of martial education than their German and Italian counterparts.

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<sup>53</sup> This is discussed by Nevile, "Dance in Europe 1250-1750," 16-23, and in Anglo, "The Barriers: From Combat to Dance (Almost)," 92-94.

It is not that important whether we can tell how successful the first English manuscripts were at teaching personal arms. We do know that these texts, adapted from oral forms of presentation to one partly modelled on recipe literature, were too temporary and personal to be useful once the reader progressed past the early stages of training. These texts were never designed to teach the reader, only to aid the reader in remembering what he had already learned through other means. We know that that these texts did not appear from a vacuum; they followed the strategies of established textual styles. Eventually, the appeal of the continental style won over the English writers and by the late sixteenth-century the paritactical strategies that produced these lists of martial drills, short recipes of violence, disappeared into commonplace books and household archives only to return to confound modern readers.

## The Apparatus

The editorial guidelines for the following transcriptions is an adaptation of "semi-diplomatic" rules used by the Cambridge English Renaissance Electronic Service (CERES) operated by the University of Cambridge.<sup>1</sup> Transcriptions follow the original line lengths but other aspects of text arrangement are preserved only where it is important for interpretation of the text. Interlinear additions, corrections, deletions, damaged script, and other features are indicated in the apparatus. Line numbering generally omits titles and rubrics.

### Superscript and brevigraphs

Superscript contractions have been left unexpanded as have the scribal choices of þ for *th*, & for *and*, and ȝ for *yogh*. The Harley scribe tends to add a macron over &, but this has been omitted in the apparatus. Medial and terminal abbreviations are common in all three manuscripts such as the macron indicating *n* and *m*, found in rēnyng and sprÿge. The use of the *r* loop for terminal -er appears often in *quarter*. Other brevigraphs appear as well such as the *pro-* *p* abbreviation and *con-* as in *contrary* in Harley. Expanded abbreviations are indicated by italics.

### Transcription conventions

/	Indicates a virgule in the original text.
[xxx]	Indicates text supplied by the editor to correct obvious errors, to improve meaning or to expand abbreviations where a mark of contraction is absent in the manuscript.
<--->	Angle brackets indicate characters added by the editor where the manuscript is illegible.
\xxx/	Text inserted by the scribe, either above the line or in the margin.
<b>XXX</b>	Engrossed text or text that uses a different script than the rest of the MS.
<u>xxx</u>	Titles or rubricated text.
//xxx//	Text added in a hand other than that of the original scribe. Notes will indicate attribution.

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1 The transcription conventions are described here: "English Handwriting 1500-1700: An Online Course", <http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/ceres/ehoc/conventions.html>. For more information on this project see "CERES", <http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/ceres/main.htm>.

## Appendix A

### Harley 3542, ff. 82-85

#### The manuscript.

London, British Library, MS Harley 3542 is a composite codex in three parts bound together in the sixteenth century. The fight text is contained in the second section, ff. 17-94, which contains mostly Latin and Middle English texts on alchemy and medical charms. The section is in a single hand that uses a fairly formal *Anglicana* or English book-hand. There are engrossed letters in green ink at the start of each lesson on f. 82r, but only blanks or small place-holder letters appear in the rest of the lessons. The contents, scribal style, and paper suggest the text was copied between 1410 and 1430.

The provenance of the manuscript is unclear before the sixteenth century. The earliest ownership marks that appear in part two are for "Thomas Byaed vicar of Bokerill."<sup>1</sup> The three units were later collected and bound together by the next identifiable owner, Samuel Knott of Combe Raleigh, Davon. Knott added some titles and rubrics as well as extensive marginal commentary. From Knott the MS came into the collection of Robert Burschough, another ecclesiastic, who died in 1709. Robert Harley purchased MS 3542, amongst other items, from Burschough's widow in 1715.<sup>2</sup>

#### The contents of ff. 17-94:

- ff. 17-25v: "Semita recta Alkyme Alberti," which begins "Explicit Semita recta Alkemiae Alberti..." This is an anonymous alchemical text incorrectly attributed to Albertus Magnus.<sup>3</sup>
- ff. 25v-28: "Per artificium vero fit & transmutacio metallorum."<sup>4</sup>
- ff. 28v-35v: Alchemical text attributed to Ramon Lull, begins "Verbum albrematum verissimum & approbatum de occultis..." Also contains a recipe attributed to Roger Bacon by Knott.<sup>5</sup>
- ff. 40-41v: "Compcionis lapidum philosophorum .4. modis..."
- ff. 41v-44: Alchemical recipes beginning "In nomine domini nostri Jeshu Christi. Recipe sol in folio vel tenua lamina sicut aurifabri..."
- ff. 44v-55v: "Epistola boni viri." Nuvoloni speculates that this is "De alchemie perfectum" of Guillelmus Sedacarius.<sup>6</sup>
- ff. 55v-56, 56-57v: "Casus magnorum lopus gravis anteriorum..."<sup>7</sup>
- ff. 57v-59v: "De breuiloquio Johannis Pauperis quidem tractus..."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Byaed's inscriptions appear on ff. 67v and 87r. Byaed also uses a monogram "T" that appears on ff. 62r and 94r. > He has also made some marginal notes, mostly in the medical material. This may be the "Thomas Bearde" recorded as Vicar of Buckerell in 1561 in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 97: "Thomas Bearde (CCED Person ID 147749)," *The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540-1835* <http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk>.

<sup>2</sup> See the discussion of provenance in Nuvoloni, "The Harleian Medical Manuscripts," 12, 16.

<sup>3</sup> This title is added by Knott.

<sup>4</sup> Listed in L. Thorndike and P. Kibre, *A Catalogue of Incipits of Medieval Scientific Writings in Latin: Revised Edition* (London: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1963), 1031.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1317.

<sup>6</sup> [Nuvoloni] "British Library Manuscript Catalogue." See also: Thorndike and Kibre, 982.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 507, 713.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 1568.

ff. 59v-60v: "Opus mirabile."<sup>9</sup>  
 ff. 60v-64v: "Incipit Epistola Johannis Dastyn." John Dastyn's "Libellus aureus."<sup>10</sup>  
 ff. 64v-67v: "Hic docendi est de arte aurifaborum siue argentorum..."<sup>11</sup>  
 ff. 68v-80v: "Radix mundi," attributed to Johannes Sautre (John Sawtry) both in a simple cipher on ff. 80v-81 and in Knott's marginal notes at f. 68.<sup>12</sup>  
 ff. 80v-81: "Hec sunt secreta quis gaudebis sine meta..." A collection of alchemical verses.<sup>13</sup>  
 ff. 81-82: "Valde bona notibilis..."<sup>14</sup>  
 ff. 82-85: "The vse of the Two Hand Swerde."  
 ff. 85-94v. Various medical and alchemical recipies, including a Middle English verse at f. 91 that begins "I bequeue me all þys day To jhesu cryste that all may..."<sup>15</sup>

### Notes on the hand

Although the hand is a fairly consistent *Anglicana* book-hand the scribe has several inconsistent idiosyncrasies. The initial "s" is usually the long single stroke, like an "f" missing the bar, but the scribe will occasionally employ the single compartment "s" that looks like "6." He also uses the single compartment "s" as an initial. The scribe also varies his medial "e" between a single compartment "e" and a more cursive double compartment version. These are found both medial and terminal without much consistency. The scribe alternates "v," "u" and "w" at various points and these have been left unchanged. Virgules usually appear as a double slash mark like "/" but as in line 173 he uses a dash like a "~" or tilde. The scribe occasionally adds a terminal flourish that can be easily mistaken for an "re" contraction, particularly in the verse passages. The scribe appears to have had some concern over fitting the verses on f.84v as they crowd somewhat at the foot of the page and use virgules again to indicate line ends. This crowding does not appear on the recto.

There are some small rubrications throughout the text that concentrate in the first leaf but are omitted in the rest of the text. These consist mostly of small red dots or points that bracket numbering as in the "ij" at the end of line 4, and the "ij" at line 8.<sup>16</sup> The short Latin phrases, variations of *Lectio*, placed at the end of five of six lessons on f. 82 have been retained but are set off in angle brackets as they are likely additions by the scribe and appear in red ink.

f. 82r

//The Vse of the two hand sworde//<sup>17</sup>  
 The ferste pleyng & begymnyng of the<sup>18</sup>

<sup>9</sup> This title provided by Knott. *Ibid.*, 1321.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 1569.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 593.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 1005.

<sup>13</sup> Dorthea Waley Singer, *Catalogue of Latin and Vernacular Alchemical Manuscripts in Great Britain and Ireland*, 3 vols. (Brussels: Maurice Lamertin, 1930), ii, 821.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 661.

<sup>15</sup> Thorndike and Kibre, 1329. Singer, *Catalogue of Latin and Vernacular*, ii, 1111.

<sup>16</sup> This is a common feature with Roman numbering, Clemens and Graham 91.

<sup>17</sup> This title is a later addition, likely by Samuel Knott.

<sup>18</sup> The lessons on this leaf are supplied with decorative initials rendered in green ink. The first at line 1 is three lines

substansce of þe too honde swerde/ þe  
 ferst grounde begynnyþ w<sup>t</sup> an hauke  
 beryng in w<sup>t</sup> þe foote w<sup>t</sup> a double Rownde w<sup>t</sup> .iiij. 5  
 fete howtewarde & as meny homward maky-  
 ng ende of þ<sup>e</sup> play w<sup>t</sup> a quarter cros smetyn<sup>19</sup>  
 w<sup>t</sup> an hauke snach setting downn by þ<sup>e</sup> foote  
 The .ij. lesson ys .ij. haukys / *Lectio secunda*<sup>20</sup>  
 w<sup>t</sup> .ij. halfe haukys cleuyng þ<sup>e</sup> elbowys  
 wyth þe same ij doubyl rowndys forsayde w<sup>t</sup> 10  
 .iiij. foote owtward. & as meny hamward/ *Lect*  
 The .iiij. lesson ys a sprynge upward. w<sup>t</sup> .2.  
 an hauke quarter. downe by þe cheke. w<sup>t</sup> .ij. dou[-]  
 byl rowndys stonyng borne ouer þ<sup>e</sup> hed. w<sup>t</sup> a dow[-]  
 byl rownde bornn in w<sup>t</sup> þe foote. w<sup>t</sup> .iiij. owtwardes 15  
 The .iiij. lessonn. ys w<sup>t</sup> a dowbil hauke/ *Lectio*  
 wyþ .ij. doubil rowndis beryng in w<sup>t</sup> a stop/ .3.  
 vp ouer bothe feete/ *Lectio quinta*  
 The .5. lesson ys w<sup>t</sup> an hauke meuyd ouer þe<sup>21</sup>  
 hede. but bere h<sup>t</sup> vp w<sup>t</sup> a stop. breke of þ<sup>e</sup> erþe 20  
 w<sup>t</sup> rennyng rowndis ouer þ<sup>e</sup> hede w<sup>t</sup> .ij. halfe hau[-]  
 kis born w<sup>t</sup> .ij. koc stappis of þ<sup>e</sup> foete/ <*Lectio 6*><sup>22</sup>  
 The .6. lesson beres ovte þ<sup>e</sup> erþe w<sup>t</sup> .iiij. koc stoppes  
 & so come home ovte of danger a ʒayne/ \Lectio .7./  
 f. 82r  
 [T]he .7. lesson ys. Smyte an hauke cros. cros ouer<sup>23</sup> 25  
 þe elbovyys w<sup>t</sup> a bak stop & so smyte h<sup>t</sup> on þ<sup>e</sup> fet  
 [T]he .8. lesson ys w<sup>t</sup> an hauke cros smytyn w<sup>t</sup>  
 a bak stop bornn w<sup>t</sup> boþ<sup>e</sup> fete & a *contrary* hauke  
 hamward born w<sup>t</sup> .ij. stoppis/ These ben strokes<sup>24</sup>  
 & revle of þ<sup>e</sup> .ij. hondswerd to make hys hond 30  
 & ys foete a corde/

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tall. The initial at line 8 is two lines tall. The rest are one line height.

<sup>19</sup> The scribe is inconsistent in his use of superscript "e" in "þe" as is the case in this line. These have been retained in the transcription.

<sup>20</sup> These short Latin phrases have been added in blank spaces after the scribe's virgules in red ink. They only appear on the first leaf of the collection and may have been added at the same time as the decorative initials.

<sup>21</sup> Numbering of the lessons changes from roman to Arabic numerals at this point. The figures used are consistent with the style common up to the late fifteenth-century: Clemens and Graham, 91.

<sup>22</sup> The rubricated numbering added in the void at the end of this line has incorrectly numbered this lesson as the sixth, rather than the fifth. This error affect the next rubricated numbering as well.

<sup>23</sup> The space for the decorative "T" in this line is empty, as is the case with the rest of the decorative spaces in the text.

<sup>24</sup> There is a deliberate gap in the text between "stoppis" and "These" but there are no punctis.

[T]he pley of þ <sup>e</sup> .ij. hondswerde/ <sup>25</sup> by twene .ij. bokelers ys. fyrst take a Sygne of þ <sup>e</sup> gronde þere 3e pley by twene .ij. <sup>26</sup> bokelers. Make ferst a Sygne to hem w <sup>t</sup> a lar[-] ge hauke downn to þ <sup>e</sup> grownde. w <sup>t</sup> .iij. rollyng strokis. w <sup>t</sup> an hauke to þ <sup>e</sup> oder side/ [T]he .ij. lesson ys a chase. or an hauke wyþ a quarter bornn in w <sup>t</sup> a kocstop. \&/ an hauke bornn <sup>27</sup> in w <sup>t</sup> a chase foynn. y[s] made vp w <sup>t</sup> a ly3te spryng/ [T]he .3. lessonn ys. a chase. w <sup>t</sup> .ij. havkys/ cleuyng þe elbovis/ [T]he .4. lessonn. ys a chase smetyn w <sup>t</sup> .ij. half rowndis. w <sup>t</sup> .ij. kocstoppis. a quarter w <sup>t</sup> a stoppe an hauke w <sup>t</sup> a chase foyn. w <sup>t</sup> þe stroke a ven- ture smetyn on .iij. fete. & made vp w <sup>t</sup> a rake downn. & bore vp w <sup>t</sup> a dovbil hauke. & so serue þ <sup>e</sup> stroke auentur vp on boþ <sup>e</sup> fete/ [T]he .5. lesson. ys a chase w <sup>t</sup> an hauke/ & w <sup>t</sup> a bakstop stondyng on þ <sup>e</sup> foote. & playng on þat <i>oper</i> syde a quarter & þ <sup>e</sup> same chase. & an hauk w <sup>t</sup> a stop. & an hauke w <sup>t</sup> a chase foyn <i>contrary</i> smy[-]  f. 83r  ten. & so smyte in w <sup>t</sup> boþe Feete i[n] made vp w <sup>t</sup> .ij. halfe hauke. w <sup>t</sup> .ij. bakstoppis. & w <sup>t</sup> þ <sup>e</sup> rennyng [T]he .6. lesson ys .ij. hauke quarters / robnys w <sup>t</sup> a brokyn halfe hauke a leyng downn/ to þ <sup>e</sup> foete w <sup>t</sup> a <i>contrary</i> honde & þis is þ <sup>e</sup> fyrst leyng a dovne/ [T]he .7. lesson & þ <sup>e</sup> fyrst takyng vp ys .iij. Ra- kys vpward. & .iij. dovneward/ .& þan in w <sup>t</sup> a grete stoppe. w <sup>t</sup> doubyl quarter wel smytyn. beryng ovte w <sup>t</sup> þe foete a brokyn halfe hauke setting downe þe swerde by þ <sup>e</sup> foete/ [T]he .8. lesson & þ <sup>e</sup> secunde leyng a dovne of þy swerde .ij. haukys w <sup>t</sup> a quarter \&/ in w <sup>t</sup> þe foete w <sup>t</sup> a brokyn hauke. a leyng dovne to þe foete w <sup>t</sup>	35  40  45  50    55  60  65
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<sup>25</sup> A blank, two lines tall, is left for the initial "T". Hester, "The Vse of the Two Hand Swerde," treats this line as a separate title, like the rubrics made by Knott, 19, line 26.

<sup>26</sup> The "3e" here is read as "ye" in Hutton, 41. Hester "The Vse of the Two Hand Sworde," reads it as "he," 19, line 27.

<sup>27</sup> The "&" here is inserted above the line.

a contrary honde/<sup>28</sup>  
 [T]he .9. lesson & þ<sup>e</sup> secunde takyng vp of þy sw-  
 erde ys .iij. haukys on euerych syde stonyng  
 on þ<sup>e</sup> erthe stil w<sup>t</sup> a stop born meuyd on þ<sup>e</sup> erþ<sup>e</sup>. 70  
 w<sup>t</sup> an hauke quarter born w<sup>t</sup> a stop. & w<sup>t</sup> a dou-  
 byl quarter honde & foete born ouer þ<sup>e</sup> hede. an  
 hauke menyd setting þy swerd by þy foete/  
 [T]he .10. lesson & þ<sup>e</sup> .iij. leyng dovne/  
 of þy swerd ys a quarter & in w<sup>t</sup> þe foete/ 75  
 & an hauke brokyng at þ<sup>e</sup> cheke. & þen a doubil  
 hauke a bovt þe hed brokyn. & þen in w<sup>t</sup> a  
 spryng of þ<sup>e</sup> foete. w<sup>t</sup> a stroke auentures. w<sup>t</sup> a quar-  
 ter & w<sup>t</sup> a snache. leyng to þ<sup>e</sup> erþe w<sup>t</sup> a contrary hond/  
 [T]he .11. lesson & þe iij. takyng vp/ 80  
 ys w<sup>t</sup> a spryng w<sup>t</sup> þ<sup>t</sup> on hond riȝte/

f. 83v

vp on to þ<sup>e</sup> visage w<sup>t</sup> an halfe rounde brokyn in  
 to a stop w<sup>t</sup> a reuerence to þe cros of þy hilde  
 w<sup>t</sup> a long cartr stroke smetyng flat dovne by þ<sup>e</sup>  
 bak. w<sup>t</sup> a doubil brokyn spryng bak þ<sup>e</sup> foete 85  
 a drawyng. & in w<sup>t</sup> a long rake dobil. in wyþ  
 þe foete walkyng & on eche foete .ij. rakys. &  
 at þ<sup>e</sup> alurys ende smyte in .iiij. rakys doubille  
 born in to a stop. & so þ<sup>e</sup> other rakys in to þ<sup>e</sup> a-  
 lures ende. & dovbil þ<sup>t</sup> on in to a stop. a gaynn 90  
 turnyng in w<sup>t</sup> a long doubil rake w<sup>t</sup> a stop. &  
 w<sup>t</sup> þ<sup>t</sup> oþer hond spryng vp þy swerd to þy ryȝt  
 shulder & smyte þy stroke auentures w<sup>t</sup> an  
 hauke setting dovne þy swerd by þy foete/

//To incounter w<sup>th</sup> the Too Hand sword//<sup>29</sup>

and as for þ<sup>e</sup> first contenanncce of þ<sup>e</sup> .ij. hond<sup>30</sup> 95  
 swerde. þ<sup>u</sup> shalt walk in w<sup>t</sup> .iij. foete  
 to þy aduersary w<sup>t</sup> a bold spirite & a me-  
 ry herte w<sup>t</sup> a sengyl quarter .& a sengil quarter  
 wastid wastyd w<sup>t</sup> a cartre stroke. & þ[en] smyte þy<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> "contrary" is abbreviated with a macron over the "o", as opposed to the convention in line 28 and 57.

<sup>29</sup> This title added in Knott's hand.

<sup>30</sup> The initial "a" that begins this line is a small place-holder for a three-line decorative initial that was never finished.

<sup>31</sup> Repetition of "wastid wastyd" is likely scribal error.



counter bothe of & on & lete þy honde & þy foet 100  
 acorde togeder in goede afense/  
 [T]he .ij. counter ys w<sup>t</sup> a doubil quarter w<sup>t</sup> þy  
 foete goyng & a dobil quarter wastid in to a  
 stop & in w<sup>t</sup> þy foete & smyte a large hauke  
 up in to þ<sup>e</sup> skye. w<sup>t</sup> a doubil snache/ 105  
 [T]he .3. lesson of þe covnter ys. a rake on eche  
 f.84r  
 foete goyng til þ<sup>u</sup> come to þy aduerSary. w<sup>t</sup> a dou-  
 bil quarter w<sup>t</sup> hole defence born w<sup>t</sup> an oþer dobil quar-  
 ter w<sup>t</sup> hole defence/ breke in & sygne a toche w<sup>t</sup>  
 a large spryng & smyte w<sup>t</sup> fers stroke meuyd 110  
 w<sup>t</sup> hole defence & so smyte þ<sup>s</sup> cownter boþ<sup>e</sup> of &  
 on. & bovre þy strokis of eche of þy cownters/  
 [T]he .4. cownter ys .ij. halfe rovndys/  
 wyth a ternyd foyne. beryng in þ<sup>e</sup> foyne w<sup>t</sup> a quar-  
 ter. & an hauke at þe skye w<sup>t</sup> a snache w<sup>t</sup> þy ho- 115  
 le defence born a fore the. & þ<sup>s</sup> cownter most be  
 smete w<sup>t</sup> tranuspsyng of þy<sup>e</sup> erþe of boþ<sup>e</sup> fete for  
 surenesse of defence/  
 [T]he .5. cownter is an halfe rownde of þ<sup>e</sup> secende  
 foete. & þan smyte .ij. dobil haukys & boþ<sup>e</sup> sides 120  
 hole. & broken cnter hym w<sup>t</sup> ferst foete. w<sup>t</sup> a do-  
 bil quarter. & so smyte a carter stroke but terne  
 hym w<sup>t</sup> a stroke auenturs w<sup>t</sup> hole defence. &  
 þys smyte þ<sup>s</sup> cownter boþ<sup>e</sup> of & on. & lete þy eye  
 þy foete. & þy honde acorde in þy defence. þ<sup>e</sup> 125  
 cause of stroke auenturs is callyd. for a man ter-  
 nyth hys bak to hys enmy/  
 [T]he .6. cownter ys beryng in w<sup>t</sup> .iiij. foynys on  
 bothe fete. & loke þ<sup>u</sup> tune hond & foete & smyte  
 a large quarter. & ber in a stop w<sup>t</sup> þy bak na- 130  
 kyd born. & smyte a large hauke w<sup>t</sup> fers hert  
 & draw hym sor vp to þ<sup>e</sup> skye/  
 [T]he .7. cownter ys meuyd w<sup>t</sup> .iiij. meuyd foynis  
 & transpose ham boþ<sup>e</sup> goyng & comyng. & smyte  
 þy foynys w<sup>t</sup> in þy sengyl quarter smyte a 135  
 f.84v  
 & at þe last quarter smyte a Large spryng w<sup>t</sup> a<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Although the beginning of this line does not seem to fit correctly with the previous line on f. 84r, the foliation makes it difficult to believe that there is any missing text here. Either the "a" at the end of line 135 or the "&" at

lusty stop a for & þen a chace foyne/

//The play with the 2 hand sword in verse//<sup>33</sup>

[A]man þ<sup>t</sup> wol to þ<sup>e</sup> to[ ]hond swerd lere boþ<sup>e</sup>  
close & clere/ He most haue a goede eye  
boþ<sup>e</sup> fer & nere/ & an in stop. & an owte 140  
stop. & an hauke quaterē/ A cantel. a doblet. an<sup>34</sup>  
half for hys fere/ too rowndys. & an halfe w<sup>t</sup>  
a goede chere/ this ys þ<sup>e</sup> ferst cownter of þ<sup>e</sup>  
toohond swerd sere/ Bynde hem to gedere &  
sey god spede/ two quarters & a rownde a stop 145  
þ<sup>u</sup> hym bede/ A rake w<sup>t</sup> a spryng þere þ<sup>u</sup> hym a by-  
de/ Falle in w<sup>t</sup> an hauke & stride nozte to wyde/  
smyte a *rennyng quarter* owte for hys syde  
Fal a *pon* hys harneys yf he wole a byde  
come in w<sup>t</sup> a rake in euery a syde 150  
An hole rownde & an halfe. wath so h<sup>t</sup> be tyde  
.iiij. quarters & a rownde. & auenturs stroke wyth  
Bere up hys harnes & gete þ<sup>u</sup> þe gryth  
Dobyl vp lyztly & so as y seye  
Fal in w<sup>t</sup> an hauke & bere a goede eye 155  
A spryng & a rownde & stap in wyth  
spare nozth an hauke yf he hye in þy kyth  
smyte a *rennyng quarter* sore owte of þy honde  
A byde a *pon* a *pendent* & lese not þy londe  
Smyte in þy lyfte foete & cleue ryzt doune 160  
sede ovte of þy ryzte hond & smyte an hauke  
rovnde/ Fresly smyte þy strokis by dene/ And<sup>35</sup>  
hold wel þy lond path hyt may defend/  
  
f.85r  
thy rakys. þy rowndis. þy quarters a **bowte**  
Thy stoppis. þy foynys. lete hem fast rowte 165  
Thy spryngys. þy quarters. þy rabetis also  
Bere a goede eye & lete þy hond go  
Fy on a false hert þ<sup>t</sup> dar not a byde  
wen he leyþ rovndys. & rakys *rennyng* by h<sup>s</sup> side

---

the start of line 136 could be scribal mistakes.

<sup>33</sup> Title added by Knott.

<sup>34</sup> The virgule in this line is the curved mark like 'u' rather than the '/' mark used elsewhere. The scribe uses the curved virgule again at line 143.

<sup>35</sup> The scribe uses a virgule after "rovnde" but uses a short line filler, like a tilde, after "due."

Fle not hastily for a lytil pryde  
 For lytil wote þy aduersary wath hym shal betide 170  
 lete strokys fast folowe after hys honde  
 And hauk rovnde & in w<sup>t</sup> a stop & fal þ<sup>t</sup> þ<sup>u</sup> stond  
 Greue not gretly þov þ<sup>u</sup> ne tochyd a lyte  
 ffor an after stroke ys beter yf þ<sup>u</sup> dar hym smyte 175  
 A gode rovnde w<sup>t</sup> an hauke & smyte ryzt dovne  
 Gedyr vp a doblet & spare not hys crowne  
 w<sup>t</sup> a rownde & a rake a byde at a bay  
 w<sup>t</sup> a rennyng quarter sette hym oute of hys way  
 Thys lrnþ<sup>e</sup> þ<sup>e</sup> lettrs þ<sup>t</sup> stondyn in hys syzte 180  
 To teche. or to play. or ellys for to fyzte  
 These lrnþ<sup>e</sup> þ<sup>e</sup> strokys of þy hole grovnde  
 For hurte. or for dynte or ellys for depys  
 wonde

## Appendix B

### Cotton Titus A xxv, f. 105

#### The manuscript

London, British Library, MS Cotton Titus A xxv, f. 105v-r. The volume is a composite collection of six items from the thirteenth to fifteenth-century on paper and vellum bound as a single codex in the seventeenth century. The present text is on the final leaf of a twelve-leaf gathering of paper of Latin and Middle English verse and prose. The gathering is in a single hand using an informal late fifteenth-century secretary hand.

#### Notes on the text

The scribe uses an informal secretary with few pen-lifts which, combined with the lack of ruling and the generally poor condition of the leaf, makes accurate reading difficult. The final nine lines on f. 105v. are particularly difficult to read. However, under ultra-violet light the characters are still largely legible. The reading here is slightly different from the edition forthcoming in *Opuscula*, largely due to a different apparatus.<sup>1</sup> The scribe shows little variation between the majuscule and minuscule "a" and "r" graph which has made it difficult to accurately transcribe those variations. The scribe also had a tendency to linger on his flourishes at terminal letters, particularly "A" and these could easily be mistaken for periods or other marks of punctuation. These do not appear to be deliberate and so have been omitted from the transcription.

f. 105r

#### Strokez off ij hand swerde

- a Fyrste a rownde for the waste sengyll w<sup>t</sup> a fune  
Also a quarter w<sup>t</sup> a fune. A rake sengyll w<sup>t</sup> a fune  
A dowbull rownde a dowbyll rake with a nawke.  
A quarter & a rake & a wype with a spryng vydyng  
with the lyfte hand. with a quarter w<sup>t</sup> a fune skypyng 5  
with a wype. Than a quarter & breke a fune atte þe ryght  
shulder w<sup>t</sup> a rabecke
- a Than þe chase Fyrst a dowbyll rownde w<sup>t</sup> a bakke fune  
and a fore fune rennyng w<sup>t</sup> a rabette þan þan rowndez<sup>2</sup>  
voydyng with a reste a þan a bakke fune to the (ton)e 10  
a fore fune to the (tother) w<sup>t</sup> a bakke fune to þe fune w<sup>t</sup> a  
n awke (su) yng. And euer þe fote þe hand the hye & the herte  
to accorde

---

<sup>1</sup> See Geldof, "Strokez off ij hand swerde."

<sup>2</sup> "þan þan" is understood here as "then the." This is an archaic use of the articles from Old English. However, it is unlikely that such an artifact would survive in a mid-fourteenth century text such as this. Therefore, it is likely this is the result of scribal error.

Stroekes atte þe ij hand staffe

The fyrst pointe is a florysh about the  
fynger þe nexte florysh is abowte þe hande 15  
And thanne iij quarteres And a rownde and  
ii rakes & ij funes iij quarteres closede  
staffe A j rounde war hym your armes be hynde  
& than ij hawkes for þe wrong syde (bryng)  
A fune for hym in þe tother syde And þe 20  
herte þe fote þe Eye to accorde et  
cet

## Appendix C

### MS Additional 39564

#### The manuscript

Additional is preserved as a small vellum scroll, 150 x 613 mm with unlined text copied on both sides, the dorse beginning at the foot of the face. The manuscript was a gift to the British Museum by Reverend Alfred Fuller, May 1917.

#### Notes on the text

The scribe uses a rapid and informal sixteenth-century secretary hand and is the work of one scribe. The scribe is free with abbreviations, but uses them primarily in the body of the lessons, rather than in the formulaic ending phrases such as at line 74 and 75 where he uses "yo" but expands the word in 76 as "youre." The scribe employs -er, pro- brevigraphs and is fairly consistent in the use of þ<sup>e</sup> throughout.

The titles for the lessons often have a small amount of embellishment for initial letters. The scribe uses only a few marks of punctuation, such as a virgule at line 46. Water damage has made some characters difficult to read, particularly in the first three lines were repairs to the vellum have obscured letters and the final three lessons on the dorse which are heavily soiled.

[face]

#### The fyrste fflorysh

A quarter fayre before yow <deleveryde> w<sup>t</sup> oon hande voydyng bake  
the ryght fote. wyth <an other> quarter w<sup>t</sup> bothe hands. A downe ryght  
stroke voydyng bake the lyffte fote standyng styll play iij Rakys lythly  
Clevyng by the[e]lbowes w<sup>t</sup> a quarter fayre before yow wyth both handys  
And ij quaeters after w<sup>t</sup> ij turnes A downe ryght stroke voydyng bake 5  
the lyfte fote. styll standyng play y<sup>e</sup> sayde iij Rakys w<sup>t</sup> a quarter fayre  
before you And ij quarters affter w<sup>t</sup> ij turnes A downe ryght stroke  
settyng forth þ<sup>e</sup> ryght fote as forre <-- --><sup>e</sup> lyfte w<sup>t</sup> a brokon foyne<sup>1</sup>  
uppon the lyffte syde an other on þ<sup>e</sup> ry<ght>t syde turnyng þ<sup>e</sup> swerde under<sup>2</sup>  
þ<sup>e</sup> ryght arme bryng hyt <vp> w<sup>t</sup> þ<sup>e</sup> same sy<de> wyth a brokyn foyne uppon 10  
þ<sup>e</sup> lyffte syde an other uppon the ryght syde turnyng yo<sup>r</sup> swerde fote  
the poynt sofftle before yow uppon the grownde

#### The secunde florysh

A quarter fayre before you w<sup>t</sup> oon hande standyng styll sete In þ<sup>e</sup>  
ryght l[e]ge w<sup>t</sup> a dragonys taylor then sett the lyffte hande uppon þ<sup>e</sup>  
swerde smytyng a quarter fayre before you w<sup>t</sup> oon hande ternyng yo<sup>r</sup> 15  
body sete in youre ryght legge as fore as yo<sup>r</sup> leffte bryngyng the

<sup>1</sup> These characters are illegible from water damage and are unreadable even under UV-light.

<sup>2</sup> The reading here is speculative, based on context.

poynte off the swerde ouer yo<sup>r</sup> hede sete hyt downe sofftly before yow  
 uppon þ<sup>e</sup> grownde then stonde styll play youre Rakys uppon e<vr>y syde  
 as offte as ye wylt restyng uppon youre ryght arme then smyte  
 a downe ryght stroke voydyng þ<sup>e</sup> leffte legge bryngyng after 20  
 the ryght legge w<sup>t</sup> a rake lyfte vppe þ<sup>e</sup> swerde ouer yo<sup>r</sup> hede  
 bryng forthe þ<sup>e</sup> ryght legge as fore as þ<sup>e</sup> lyffte. play a brokyn  
 foyne vppon eney syde turnyng the swerde oure thy ryght arme  
 setting the poynte sofftley before yow on the grownde.

The layng downe off þ<sup>e</sup> swerde

A profur to hys face folowyng In w<sup>t</sup> the ryght legge w<sup>t</sup> a rake 25  
 stonyng styll smyte a quarter fayre before yow w<sup>t</sup> an other affter  
 voydyng bake the ryght legge then smyte a downe ryght stroke  
 voydyng bake the lyffte legge w<sup>t</sup> a rake folowyng In w<sup>t</sup> the  
 ryght legge lyfftyng vp yo<sup>r</sup> handys ouer yo<sup>r</sup> ryght shulder turnyng  
 A gayne sete in yowre ryght legge before yowre lyffte sofftley lay 30  
 Downe yowre swerde

The first Chace

A ffull stroke a fore foyne w<sup>t</sup> a quarter lythly dwlyvyde And yff  
 hyt be tweys playde hyt wyll bryng you a gayn to yo<sup>r</sup> grounde.

The seconde chace

A dowble rownde wyth a bake foyne and a quarter lyghtly delyvyde  
 And hyt be tweys pleyde hyt wyll bryng you a gayne to yo<sup>r</sup> grounde 35

The thyrde Chace

A dowble rownde forwarde an other bakewarde A downe ryght stroke  
 voydyng bake þ<sup>e</sup> lyffte legge a bake foyne voydyng bake the ryght  
 legge folowyng In wyth the lyffte legge smyte a quarter bakewarde  
 And yff hyt be tweys pleyde hyt will bryng you to yo<sup>r</sup> ground

The fourthe Chace callyd þ<sup>e</sup> bowne foyne

A dowble rownde forwarde an other bakewarde a downe ryght stroke 40  
 voydyng bake the lyffte legge A bake foyne w<sup>t</sup> a bow[ ]foyne voydyng  
 bake w<sup>t</sup> the ryght legge lyghtly smyte a quarter

The fyffte Chace callyd all þ<sup>e</sup> rowndys

Do doble rowndys forewarde and there folowes Contrarye all to  
 oon man and yff you pley hyt a gayne hyt wyll bryng yow to yo<sup>r</sup> ground

The sixte Chace callyd þ<sup>e</sup> anblyng chace<sup>3</sup>

Do doble rownds forewarde w<sup>t</sup> as mony bakewarde all vppon the 45  
 lyffte fote lythly delyueryde/ then tumble forewarde rounde as a ball  
 that ys to say wythe a douneryght stroke sete forewarde the ryght  
 fote bryngyng the swerde ouer youre hede voyde bake the lyffte fote  
 w<sup>t</sup> an other downeryght stroke folowyde w<sup>t</sup> the ryght fote then  
 bryng bake the same fote w<sup>t</sup> a bake foyne sete In the lyffte fote 50  
 and smyte bake a quarter

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<sup>3</sup> "(en)blyng" likely should read as "tumblyng," it is not possible to see *tum* in the space provided.

The seuyneth Chace

A full stroke a fore foyne folowed w<sup>t</sup> a quarter pleyng a brokyn foyne vppon the ryght syde an other on the lyffte syde therste forth<sup>4</sup> a fore foyne folowyd w<sup>t</sup> ij quarters w<sup>t</sup> the sayde brokyn foynes pleyde on eu[er]y syde threste forthe a fore foyne at hys face voydyng bake wythe ij quarters 55

The Eghte Chace callyde þ<sup>e</sup> spryng

A full stroke a fore foyne setting forthe þ<sup>e</sup> lyffte fote w<sup>t</sup> the lyffte hande smyte a spryng voydyng bake þ<sup>e</sup> same fote wythe a full stroke then pley a bake foyne w<sup>t</sup> an other spryng voydyng bake the lyffte fote w<sup>t</sup> a ffull stroke then voyde bake the ryght fote and pley a doble foyne w<sup>t</sup> a spryng voydyng bake þ<sup>e</sup> lyffte fote wythe a ffull stroke pleyng an other doble foyne w<sup>t</sup> a spryng voydyng bake þ<sup>e</sup> lyffte fote wyth a full stroke and a bake foyne. 60

The ix<sup>th</sup> Chace callyd þ<sup>e</sup> foure poynts

A downe ryght stroke voydyng bake the lyffte legge sodenly pley a rake folowede wyth þ<sup>e</sup> ryght legge stonyng styll pley a quarter fayre before you then lete In the lyffte legge and smyte bake a quarter. 65

The x<sup>th</sup> chace callyd the v poynts

A downe ryght stroke voydyng bake the lyffte fote sodenly pley a rake folowyd wyth þ<sup>e</sup> ryght fote then voyde bake the lyffte legge wythe an other downe ryght stroke and pley a bake foyne voydyng bake the ryght legge steppe In w<sup>t</sup> þ<sup>e</sup> lyffte legge and smyte bake a quarter. 70

The xi<sup>th</sup> Chace callyd iij poynts

A Rake vppon þ<sup>e</sup> ryght syde standyng Styll smyte a quarter voydyng bake the ryght legge stryke an other after.

The xij<sup>th</sup> Chace callyd iij poynts <conrie><sup>5</sup>

A downe ryght stroke voydyng bake w<sup>t</sup> the lyffte legge lythtly pley a Rake folowede wyth the ryght legge then [v]oyde bake the same legge sodenly pley a quarter 75

The xiiij<sup>th</sup> Callyde þ<sup>e</sup> gettyng chace

A quarter fayre before yow w<sup>t</sup> bothe handys standyng styll pley a *profer* at hys face folowyng w<sup>t</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> Rakys bakewarde smyte a spryng turnyng w<sup>t</sup> a full stroke folowyng w<sup>t</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> Rakys before yow smyte a quarter tur[-]nyng yowre body pley ij quarters all vppon þ<sup>e</sup> lyffte fote

The Fyrste poynt of þ<sup>e</sup> cownter

A profur at hys face standyng styll then sett In þ<sup>e</sup> ryght legge w<sup>t</sup> a rake and a quarter voydyng bake þ<sup>e</sup> same legge w<sup>t</sup> an other quarter then voyd bake yo<sup>r</sup> lyffte legge and stande at yowre stoppe 80

The Seconde Countyr callyd þ<sup>e</sup> full spryng

A *profer* a rake w<sup>t</sup> a quarter an other voyde lythtly smyte a full

---

<sup>4</sup> "therste" is likely "threste," or thrust, as in line 55. The *r* and *e* trading places is a common error of metathesis.

<sup>5</sup> The final word in this title is likely "contrary." The text in the manuscript is slightly smudged in the manuscript and looks like a *con-* brevigraph with a superscript graph, two indistinct minims and a terminal "e."



spryng setting in þ<sup>e</sup> ryght legge w<sup>t</sup> a quarter and an other voyde be  
 at yo<sup>r</sup> stoppe. The thyrde Countyr callyd þ<sup>e</sup> shorte spryng w<sup>t</sup> fallyng stro[ke] 85  
 A profer a rake w<sup>t</sup> a quarter an other voyde stonyng styll a shorte  
 spryng w<sup>t</sup> a fallyng stroke then let In the Ryght legge w<sup>t</sup> a quarter  
 an other voyde and be at yowre stoppe

The xxij<sup>th</sup> Callyd the large profer w<sup>t</sup> a rabett & þ<sup>e</sup> fore quarter

A profer large stonyng styll lyghtly pley a rabett at hys leggs lowe  
 by þ<sup>e</sup> grownde then lyghtly set In þ<sup>e</sup> ryght legge w<sup>t</sup> a quarter and smyte 90  
 hym to þ<sup>e</sup> grownde then voyde bake the same legge and be at yo<sup>r</sup> stoppe

The xxiiij<sup>th</sup> callyd þ<sup>e</sup> facyng wyth þ<sup>e</sup> spryng

Also stonyng at yo<sup>r</sup> defence when yo<sup>r</sup> Enemy be gynyth to turn In w<sup>t</sup> A  
 profer bake stedfastly In hys face and preuely sett In yowre lyffte legge Cros  
 before yowre ryght legge lyghtly smytyng a full spryng. at hys leggs  
 <And also> voyde a bake yo<sup>r</sup> lyffte lege and be att yowre stoppe. then 95  
 <--> sett In the ryght w<sup>t</sup> a full quarter and an other voyde and be att  
 yowre stoppe

[Dorse]

The stoppyng Rabetts

also standyng att yo<sup>r</sup> defence. <--> y<--> beryghe yowre Enemy  
 when he begynyth to pley A profer lyghtly sett In yo<sup>r</sup> lyffte  
 legge w<sup>t</sup> a Rabett voydyng bake voydyng bake the same legge 100  
 be at yowre stopp Other els when yo<sup>r</sup> Enemy pleyth A profer  
 w<sup>t</sup> a rake and be gynnyth to pluke bake hys swerde to sete  
 a quarter lyghtly sett In yowre lyffte legge wyth þ<sup>e</sup> sayde Rabett  
 then voyde Bake the same legge and be att yowre stoppe

The Dragonnys tayle w<sup>t</sup> the pendante

A profer w<sup>t</sup> a Rake stonyng styll w<sup>t</sup> yowre ryght honde pley 105  
 a voyde quarter aboue hys hede and as the swerde turnyth a<sup>6</sup>  
 bowte. ouer yowre hede sett In yowre lyffte fote then lyghtly wyth  
 the Ryght honde and foete threste forth A foyne at hys face  
 standyng styll lyghtly bryng bake yowre swerde w<sup>t</sup> both honds  
 and threste a bove foyne att hys bely then smyte a full quarter 110  
 And an other voyde and be att your stoppe

Amen Quod I. Ledall<sup>7</sup>

The iiij<sup>th</sup> callyd the Rabett w<sup>t</sup> a downe ryght stroke

A profer A rake w<sup>t</sup> a quarter sett In yowre lyffte legge w<sup>t</sup> a rabett then sett  
 in your ryght legge w<sup>t</sup> a downeryght stroke w<sup>t</sup> bothe honds wyth  
 a foyne and a quarter w<sup>t</sup> an other voyde be att yo<sup>r</sup> stoppe

The v<sup>th</sup> callyd the iij quarters

A profur a rake wyth a quarter full stonyng styll pley an other voyde 115

<sup>6</sup> "a boue," above.

<sup>7</sup> In keeping with the scribal practice of using "i" to represent "j" the scribe uses a majuscule "I" here.

a bove hys hede w <sup>t</sup> an other at hys leggs then voyde bake the ryght legge w <sup>t</sup> an other quarter and be att youre stoppe	115
<u>The vi<sup>th</sup> poynte callyde the cros Rake</u>	
A profur a cros rake w <sup>t</sup> a foyne at hys face. w <sup>t</sup> a quarter full and an other A voyde be at youre stoppe	
<u>The vij<sup>th</sup> poynte callyd þ<sup>e</sup> downeryght stroke</u>	
A profur A rake wyth a quarter an other a voyde a downeryght stroke folowyde wyth the ryght legge then standyng styll lythly pley a fore foyne w <sup>t</sup> a quarter and an other voyde be att youre stoppe	120
<u>The viij<sup>th</sup> callyde the rabett w<sup>t</sup> a Downeryght stroke</u>	
A profur a rake w <sup>t</sup> a quarter A nother A voyde a downe ryght stroke folowyde w <sup>t</sup> the ryght legge w <sup>t</sup> a fore foyne setting In the lyffte legge lythtly pley a rabett then sett In þ <sup>e</sup> ryght legge w <sup>t</sup> a downeryght stroke a foyne w <sup>t</sup> a quarter an other a voyde be att yo <sup>r</sup> stoppe	125
<u>The ix<sup>th</sup> callyde þ<sup>e</sup> duple rownds w<sup>t</sup> ij foynes</u>	
A double rounde forwarde w <sup>t</sup> a foyne at hys face An other att hys bely standyng styll pley a quarter full w <sup>t</sup> an other voyde be att yo <sup>r</sup> stope <u>The x<sup>th</sup> callyde the snache</u>	
A profur a rake wyth a quarter full voydyng bake the ryght legge w <sup>t</sup> þ <sup>e</sup> lyffte honde smyte A snache then voyde bake yo <sup>r</sup> lyffte legge And be att yowre stoppe	130
<u>The xi<sup>th</sup> callyde þ<sup>e</sup> shorte spryng w<sup>t</sup> ij foynes folowyng</u>	
A profur a rake w <sup>t</sup> a quarter full another voyde lythtly pleyng a shorte spryng voydyng bake the lyffte legge sett hondz vppon the swerde setting vp a foyne by þ <sup>e</sup> lyffte shuldur bryng hytt forthe by fore yow sett In yo <sup>r</sup> lyffte legge wythe suche a nother foyne at hys face folowyde w <sup>t</sup> the ryght legge lythtly pley a <i>quarter</i> full w <sup>t</sup> an other voyde and be att yowre stoppe.	135
<u>The xij<sup>th</sup> poynte callyde þ<sup>e</sup> seell<sup>8</sup></u>	
A profur a rake wyth a <i>quarter</i> full and another A voyde stand[-] dyng styll lyghtly w <sup>t</sup> the lyffte lyfte honde to hys hede caste a seelle <sup>9</sup> then sett In yo <sup>r</sup> ryght legge and smyte a <i>quarter</i> full w <sup>t</sup> another voyde be att yowre stoppe	140
<u>The xiiij<sup>th</sup> poynte callyde þ<sup>e</sup> downeryght stroke stonyng styll</u>	
A profur a rake w <sup>t</sup> a full quarter another a voyde a bove hys hede stonyng styll meve yo <sup>r</sup> body bryngyng yowre swerde ouer youre ryght shuldur lyghtly smyte a downeryght stroke att hys hede wythe a foyne and a full <i>quarter</i> w <sup>t</sup> another voyde be att	145

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<sup>8</sup> Most transcriptions of this line read the final word as "fool" as it fits with other named stances and moves in German and Italian manuals. However, the graphs in this word are very clearly "seell" and it does not at all fit with the patterns in the rest of the text for the scribe to have decided to use an older *Anglicana* "o" for this title, where the same graph acts as a cursive "e" consistently.

<sup>9</sup> Repetition of "lyffte lyfte" is a scribal error.

yo<sup>r</sup> stoppe The xiiij<sup>th</sup> poynte callyde þ<sup>e</sup> brokyn spryng w<sup>t</sup> þ<sup>e</sup> foyne  
 A profur a rake w<sup>t</sup> a full quarter an other a voyde then sofftely sett  
 In yo<sup>r</sup> ryght legge be att yo<sup>r</sup> stoppe. That doon set In yo<sup>r</sup> lyffte  
 legge w<sup>t</sup> a rabett fayre a bove hys hede. lyghtly sett In youre  
 ryght legge w<sup>t</sup> a douneryght stroke at hys hede w<sup>t</sup> a foyne 150  
 and a full quarter w<sup>t</sup> an other a voyde. be a[tt] yo<sup>r</sup> stoppe

The xv<sup>th</sup> callyd þ<sup>e</sup> turnyng quarter

A profur a rake w<sup>t</sup> a quarter another A voyde standyng styll  
 hold yowre swerde w<sup>t</sup> bothe hands and bende yo<sup>r</sup> body as  
 you wylde smyte a full spryng. then loose yowre ryght  
 honde. w<sup>t</sup> the lyffte honde therste forthe þ<sup>e</sup> foyne att hys syde 155  
 setting In þ<sup>e</sup> ryght legge lyghtly w<sup>t</sup> a full quarter another  
 a voyde be att yowre stoppe.

The xvi<sup>th</sup> and þ<sup>e</sup> defence þ<sup>t</sup> nounge shalt close yow

A profur a rake w<sup>t</sup> a quarter full w<sup>t</sup> another quarter largely  
 a voyde then lyghtly turne yowre body w<sup>t</sup> a full quarter  
 an other voyde be att youre stoppe. 160

A profur a rake w<sup>t</sup> a full quarter then loose yo<sup>r</sup> lyffte honde fro[m]  
 yowre swerde. voydyng bake yowre ryght legge bryng hyt bake  
 w<sup>t</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> ryght honde fayre before yowre breste. redy to foyne  
 and come In w<sup>t</sup> a rake and a full quarter pleyng the same pley  
 twyes. then bryng bake a gayne yowre swerde w<sup>t</sup> þ<sup>e</sup> sayde ryght 165  
 honde and legge And smyte a full spryng lyghtly w<sup>t</sup> a full  
 quarter And an other A voyde and be att yowre stoppe

The xvij<sup>th</sup> callyf þ<sup>e</sup> duple spryng

A profur a rake a full quarter w<sup>t</sup> another a voyde lyghtly caste  
 owte a full shorte spryng att hys face standyng styll. when þ<sup>e</sup>  
 swerde comyth a bowte off yo<sup>r</sup> hede reterne hytt w<sup>t</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> ryght hond 170  
 att yo<sup>r</sup> ryght shuldyr. then lyghly smyte a full spryng w<sup>t</sup> a  
 full quarter an other a voyde be att youre stoppe

The xviii<sup>th</sup> callyde þ<sup>e</sup> duple rabetts

A profur a rake w<sup>t</sup> a full quarter lyghtly lett In the lyffte legge  
 w<sup>t</sup> a rabett standyng styll lyghtly pley another rabett wyth  
 a full spryng att hys leggs other els sett In þ<sup>e</sup> ryght legge w<sup>t</sup> 175  
 a downe ryght stroke att hys hede and a full quarter an other  
 a voyde and be att youre stoppe

The xix<sup>th</sup> callyde þ<sup>e</sup> cros Raks w<sup>t</sup> a quarter

A profur folowede w<sup>t</sup> as many cros Raks as yo wyll then sodenly  
 to hys elbowe smyte a full quarter w<sup>t</sup> another voyde and be att  
 yo<sup>r</sup> stoppe The xx<sup>th</sup> callyde þ<sup>e</sup> brokyn quarter w<sup>t</sup> <a> foy<ne> 180

A profur a Rake lyfftyng vp yo<sup>r</sup> swerde as ye w<ode smyte a quarter>  
 sodenly w<sup>t</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> lyffte honde therste forth a foyne to hys <----->  
 folowyde w<sup>t</sup> þ<sup>e</sup> <lyffte fote> then sett In yo<sup>r</sup> ryght legge w<sup>t</sup> a <full>  
 quarter an other voyde and be att yowre stoppe

The xxi<sup>th</sup> callyde þ<sup>e</sup> l<--- ----> þ<sup>e</sup> spryng

A profur a rake w<sup>t</sup> þ<sup>e</sup> full quarter <---- sett> In yo<sup>r</sup> lyffte legge 185  
w<sup>t</sup> þ<sup>e</sup> lyffte honde bryng þ<sup>e</sup> swerde <ouer> þ<sup>e</sup> crowne of youre hede  
as ye w<ulde> pley a rabett then stondyng styll breke þ<sup>e</sup>  
same rabett A bove yo<sup>r</sup> hede. and smyte a full spryng at  
hys leggs w<sup>t</sup> a full quarter another a voyde and be att yo<sup>r</sup> stoppe.  
fine 190

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