

## Dancing and Fencing from the Renaissance through the Nineteenth Century: A Brief Overview of Issues

Patri J. Pugliese, Ph.D.

This paper will address the relationship between dancing and fencing in Western Europe over an extended period. While there are several historical points that I intend to make, the main thrust of this paper is more polemical than historical. That is, my intention is to emphasize the reasons why scholars engaged in the historical reconstruction of either of these activities, but particularly of dance, might well want to pay some attention to the other. I will focus on three areas of correspondence between these two historical activities: the first deals with similarities in issues raised and problems encountered in our modern attempts to research and reconstruct historical movement forms; the second concerns correspondences in specific instructions within fencing manuals and dance manuals; and the third concerns more general issues of movement style in different historical periods and the potential value of practicing these two arts in parallel.

There are several inherent similarities between the activities of dance reconstruction and fencing reconstruction. In both cases, one is starting from written sources composed long ago which, while intended at the time to provide detailed instruction in performing the activity, offer many challenges to today's scholars who lack the benefit that a contemporary reader would likely have had of having seen others engaged in this activity. Past scholarship in these two areas display both similarities and differences. Both appear to have their origins at about the turn of the century a hundred years ago. In the case of dance, the initial study of historical sources seems to have had two motivations which strongly affected the nature of the work. One form, exemplified by the work of Cecil Sharp,<sup>1</sup> focussed on the revival of earlier dance forms into a national folk tradition. While very successful as a social dance form, and even more so in conveying an appreciation for early dance, compromises were made in terms of the strict reconstruction of dances. The other early form of "historical" dance was the introduction of so-called minuets and pavaues in school programs for the young, dances which had little in common with the those dances beyond their names.<sup>2</sup> Decades later, Mabel Dolmetsch, Melusine Wood and others initiated studies aimed at more faithful reconstruction of early dance.<sup>3</sup> Since that time, the field of dance history has increased more or less gradually both in the number of scholars and practitioners involved and in the depth and accuracy of their research.

The reconstruction of early fencing techniques began at about the same time, primarily by experienced fencers with a particular interest in the history of their art, such as Egerton Castle and Alfred Hutton.<sup>4</sup> While this early reconstruction activity was in many ways far more faithful to the original forms than contemporary dance reconstructions, it did not lead to any great general interest in the activity. It is only in the last ten or so years that significant numbers of students of the sword have turned their attention to primary research in early manuals. On the other hand, the number of such students has increased very rapidly and may already rival in size the dance history community.

Interestingly, the current practitioners of early fencing techniques fall into two general categories that parallel the division mentioned above in historical vs. traditional dance. One group studies the manuals with the intent of understanding through careful reconstruction the techniques specified in the individual manuals for using the weapons covered. The other, larger group, appears to be intent on creating a historically based western martial arts tradition. Just as most modern English

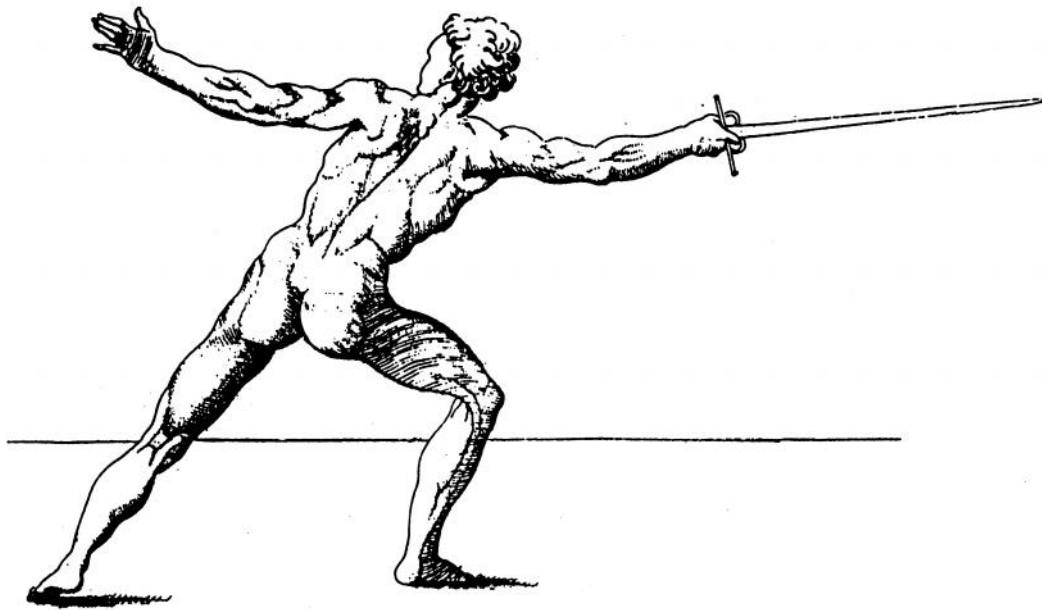


Figure 1 (Camillo Agrippa, *Trattato di Scientia d'Arme* (Roma, 1553), f. 28v.)

*Marcher un pas en avant et  
fraper le plat du pied a terre  
en le posant comme si on  
poussoit un estocade.....*




Figure 2 (Feuillet, *Recueil de Contredances* (Paris, 1706), [p. xv].)



Figure 3 (Marcelli, *Regole della Scherma* (Rome, 1686), p. 77 .)

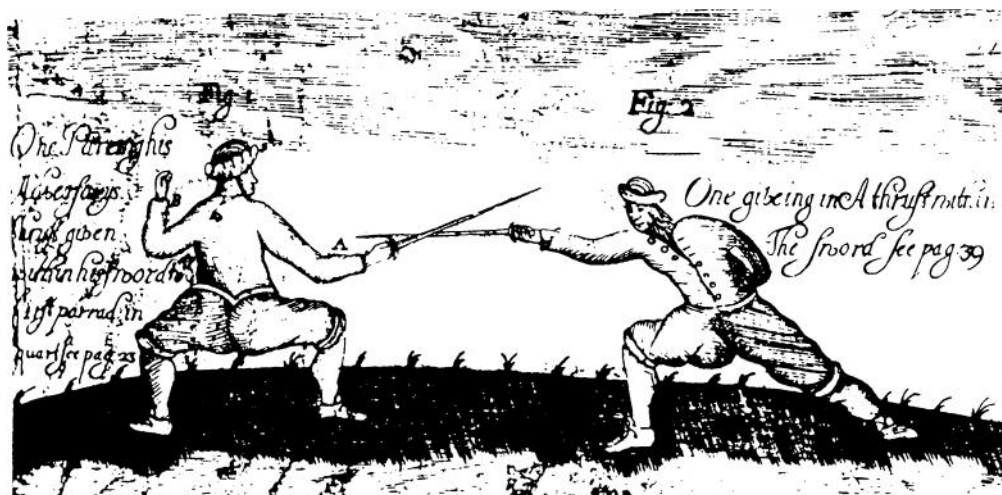


Figure 4 (H[ope], *Scots Fencing Master* (Edinburgh, 1687), opp. p. 24.)



Figure 5 (Liancour, *Le Maitre D'Armes* (Amsterdam, 1692), following p. 10.)

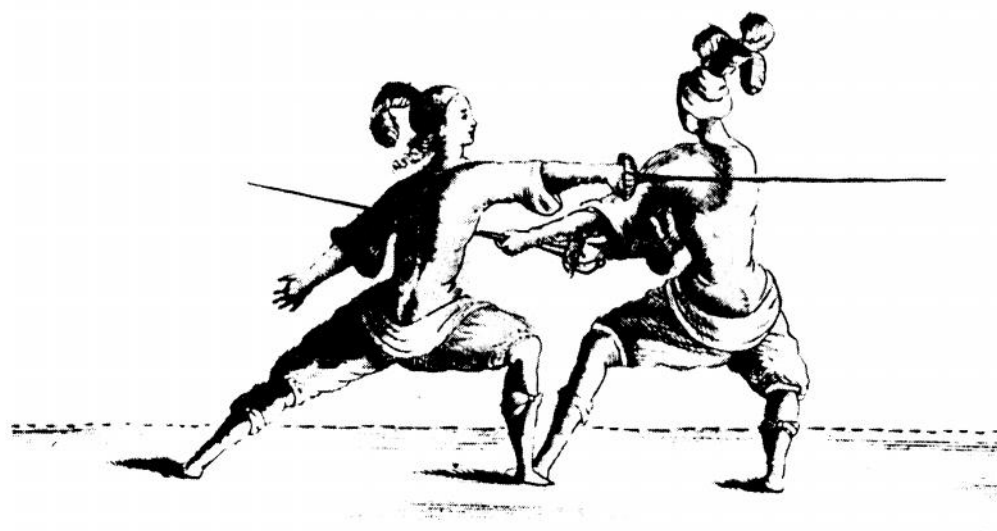


Figure 6 (di Mazo, *La Spada Maestra* (Venice, 1696), p. 93.)

Country Dancers are more concerned with a dance being fun or aesthetically pleasing than with issues of historical accuracy, these martial arts practitioners are concerned more with effective fighting techniques than with precise historical use. There remains a strong historical element in their work, but this derives primarily from the view that the best instructions for the use of, say, a rapier and dagger, will be in works written by masters whose lives were devoted to that activity.<sup>5</sup>

Among the parallels in the practice of research in these two areas is the occasional tendency to ask questions that place an arbitrarily high value on modern practice as the touchstone for judging earlier practice. In the case of fencing, a favorite question is, “When was the lunge invented?”, the lunge being the basic attacking movement of modern fencing. It consists of a sudden straightening of the rear leg which propels the fencers body forward to land on a bent forward leg. Efforts to find this movement in rapier manuals of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries have yielded legitimate successes, but have also obscured characteristics of specific manuals by ignoring the more general issues of technique expounded in them.<sup>6</sup> An equivalent question in dance history might be, “When was the Waltz invented?” I recently came across a website that featured a list of purportedly direct antecedents to the waltz with a full dozen references from before the nineteenth century (the earliest being to the year 1200) to presumed waltz-like dances.<sup>7</sup> The problem here is not that the sources and dances referred to are unworthy of study, but rather that this study should be carried out within the context of dances of that period rather than in terms of the degree to which they happened to have elements in common with a particularly popular dance of a later time. The question itself moreover ignores the issue that “The Waltz” is a highly ambiguous term, there having been many different step combinations that carried that label at different times just in the past two centuries.

Many of these points could be made for any activity for which there exists a rich history of written sources and a body of people interested in reconstructing the activity. Fencing and dancing, however, share a more intimate association in that both are disciplined movement activities in which the same teachers and students were often involved. Cesare Negri provides us with some sixteenth century examples of this in his list of dancing masters given in the opening section of *Le Gratie d'Amore* (Milan, 1602): Gio. Ambrosio Valchiera, Milanese, was master to the son of the Duke of Savoy, ‘to whom he taught not only dancing (ballare) but also fencing (schermire), and in that service he always lived with much fame.’<sup>8</sup> Gio. Battista Varade, Milanese, ‘ran a school of dancing and fencing in Milan and Rome, and was worthy master in the one and in the other profession.’<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, we have no writings by either of these masters by which we could compare the practice of dance to that of fencing in a single individual. As a modern example, the journal *The Dancing Times* introduced in October, 1919, a regular column on fencing and in 1922 announced a prize cup for competition among those dancing schools which included fencing in their curricula.<sup>10</sup>

This overlap in practitioners of these arts throughout the centuries makes it likely that there would be both explicit and implicit cases where dance instruction and fencing instruction each affected the other. A straight forward example of this is a dance step in Feuillet’s contradance “le Pistolet” from his *Recüeil de Contredances* (Paris, 1706)<sup>11</sup>. The step is described in an introductory section translated by John Essex as follows: “To walk one step forward and stamp the ground with the flat of the foot as in fencing.”<sup>12</sup> Feuillet’s original description of the step reads: “Marcher un pas en avant et fraper le plat du pied a terre en le posant comme si on pousoit un estocade.”<sup>13</sup> That is, one is not merely to walk forward a step as in fencing, but rather one is to take a step forward as if one would make a thrust. The intended motion is clearly



Figure 7 (Blackwell, *The English Fencing-Master* (London, 1705), p. 14.)



Figure 8 (Joachim Meyer, *Gründliche Beschreibung der Freyen, Ritterlichen und Adelichen Kunst des Fechtens* (Augsburg, 1600), part 1, p. 58v.)



Figure 9 (Fabritio Caroso, *Il Ballarino* (Venice, 1581), p. 31r.)



Figure 10 (Cesare Negri, *Le Gratie d'Amore* (Milan, 1602), p. 256.)

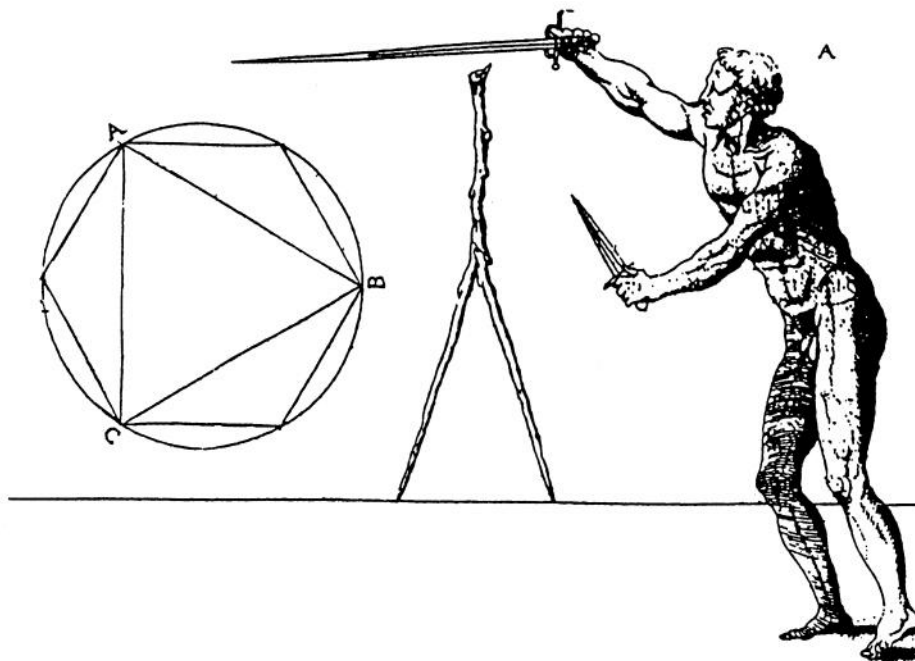


Figure 11 (Camillo Agrippa, *Trattato di Scientia d'Arme* (Roma, 1553), p. ix (verso).)

that of a fencing lunge, which is consistent with Feuillet's symbol which indicates that the right foot is advanced and lands with a slap or stamp to the ground (indicated by the extra tick mark). (Figure 2) The fencing lunge, however, has changed over the years, so we must look to contemporary sources to learn the details of this motion. Looking at the period between 1690 and 1710, there are a number of sources from which we can draw images of a fencing lunge, including the works of F.A. Marcelli (1686), William Hope (1687), Le Sieur de Liancour (1692), Bondi di Mazo (1696), Henry Blackwell (1705), and others.<sup>14</sup> (Figures 3–7)

Another example of a step reference that transcends the boundary between fencing and dancing is the “double step” (“zwifachen trit”) in Joachim Meyer's fencing manual, *Gründliche Beschreibung der ... Fechtens* (Strasbourg, 1570; 2nd ed. Augspurg, 1600). (Figure 8) Meyer uses this term in his longsword, dusack and rapier sections when he requires a greater displacement of the attacker's body than can be achieved by a single large step. In the absence of early dance experience, one might imagine that a double step is just a pair of steps. Only after several references to this “double step”<sup>15</sup> does Meyer finally give the reader a clear statement of what is entailed:

Do a double step thus: when you have stepped with your right foot to his left, and your technique requires that you should step yet further around, then step with your left foot after the right one, outwards or past behind your right foot; then before you have scarcely set the left down, you can step forth with the right, to double the [step]<sup>16</sup>

That is, a “double step” is not two steps, but rather three steps. This should not surprise historical dancers who are used to the idea of a double step consisting of three steps, or three steps with a final close.

I have discussed in a previous paper<sup>17</sup> the more interesting, but less clear, case of the term “contratempo” which appears in both dance manuals and rapier fencing manuals of the late sixteenth centuries, and will not repeat myself here.

There is a more subtle, but potentially far more significant, argument for dance historians taking into consideration (and for historical dancers actually engaging in) early fencing training. For much of the period we study, gentlemen learning Court Dances (which are the dances for which we have the most detailed descriptions and which are most readily subject to detailed reconstruction) would also have been devoting at least as much time daily to learning the art of the sword. It is difficult to imagine that the strength, sense of distance, timing, overall posture and style of movement acquired with sword in hand would not affect the individual gentleman's posture and movement style on the dance floor. Anyone interested in dance history over an extended period knows that it is not merely the specific dances that change over time, or even the types of dances, but that the smallest elements of movement and the manner in which they are to be performed also changes. One need only watch a trained ballet dancer perform, say, a Morris Dance, to appreciate that there is more to a dance form than the steps themselves. I do not regard it as at all original to suggest that the core court or ballroom dances of different historical periods each have their own movement style. My claim is that we should expect, if only by virtue of the fact that the practitioners of the two arts overlapped, to see direct correspondences between the formal dances and the movement style displayed in fencing in that same period. I suspect that this same style is displayed in other activities in each period, but I cannot think of any as likely to have as much in common as these two. A





Figure 12 (Camillo Agrippa, *Trattato di Scientia d'Arme* (Roma, 1553), prior to p. i.)

IL CONTRAPASSO FATTO CON VERÀ MATHEMATICA  
 sopra i uerri d'Ordis

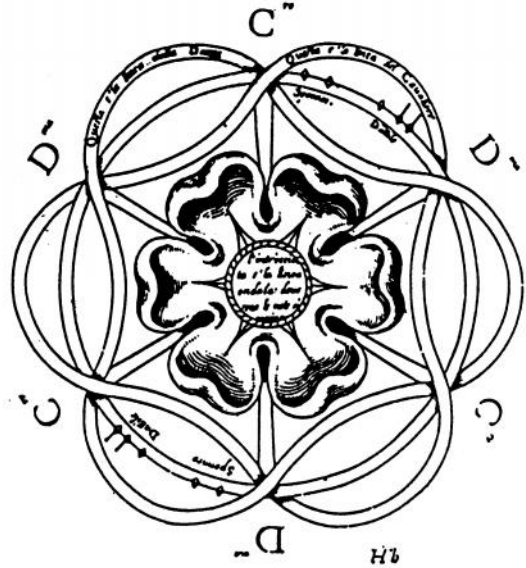


Figure 13 (Fabritio, Caroso. *Nobilta di Dame* (Venetia, 1600), p. 241.)

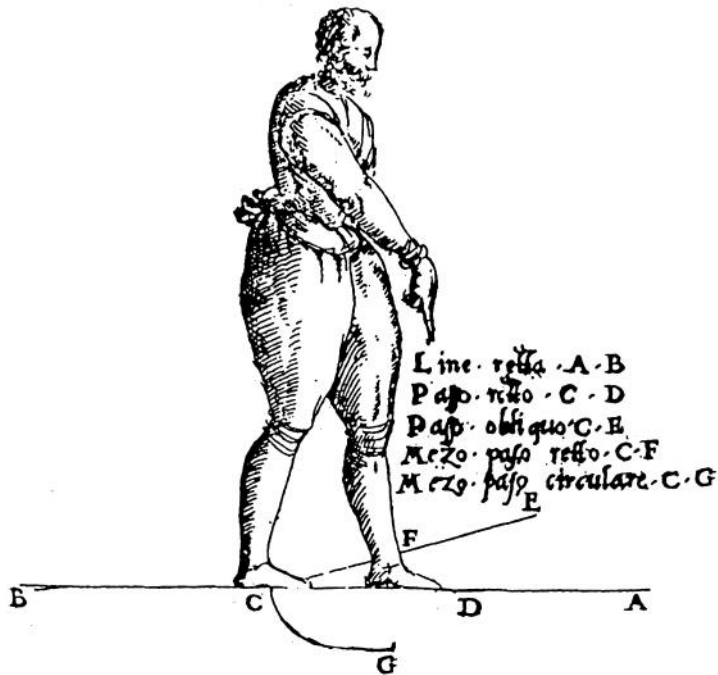


Figure 14 (Giacomo di Grassi, *Ragione di Adoprar Sicuramante l'Arme* (Venetia, 1570), p. 14.)





Figure 15 (Gerard Thibault d'Anvers, *Academie de l'Espee* (Leyden, 1628), detail of Tabula III.)

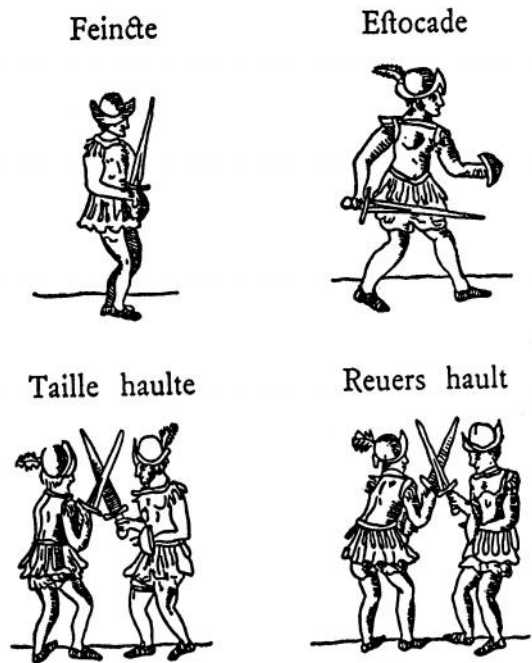


Figure 16 (Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchesographie* (Lengres, 1589; New York, 1967), p. 184.)



Figure 17 (Henry de Saint Didier, *Traicte . . . sur l'espee Seule* (Paris, 1573), p. 57v.)

detailed study of these issues is still in the future. By way of introduction to this ongoing study, the remainder of this paper will take the form of a rather superficial overview of fencing history from the 16<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries with particular reference to the most obvious parallels and correspondences between the treatment of fencing and dance in the instruction manuals of each period.<sup>18</sup>

A limited number of pre-sixteenth century fencing manuals exist in manuscript for the use of the broadsword and other weapons of war designed to crush through armor. The sixteenth century saw the introduction of a new weapon, the rapier, designed more for thrusting at unarmored opponents. The rapier was the weapon of gentlemen rather than soldiers, and it is to be seen as an almost indispensable adornment to gentlemen's dress on the street, in court and even on the ballroom floor, as evidenced by the illustrations in the dance manuals of Caroso and Negri.<sup>19</sup> (Figures 9, 10) The clear implication of these figures is that a gentleman was expected to be so comfortable wearing a sword that it was not a significant impediment to movement, presumably because gentlemen would from habit compensate for its presence in a myriad of ways of which the wearer was probably unconscious. Caroso gives specific advice to dancers on the manner of handling a sword while dancing, but this could hardly have sufficed were the wearer not already used to wearing one.<sup>20</sup>

One of the earliest manuals of the rapier is the *Trattato di Scientia d'Arme, con un Dialogo di Filosofia* (Roma, 1553) of Camillo Agrippa. This manual includes many illustrations of guard positions and of engagements between combatants. The former of these are each displayed in conjunction with a geometrical figure representing the angles and proportions proper to the posture. (Figure 11) This concern for geometry as the means of understanding nature and perfecting art can be associated with the neoplatonic philosophy that was finding favor in the second half of the sixteenth century. The importance of philosophy to the science of arms is proclaimed not only by the title of the Agrippa's treatise, but also by the opening illustration within the text which shows a debate between a philosopher of the ancient school armed with his books and a modern philosopher wearing a sword and holding instruments of mathematical learning.<sup>21</sup> (Figure 12) A corresponding concern within dance for the new mathematical philosophy is to be seen in the wonderful rosette figure in Fabritio Caroso's *Nobilta di Dame* (Venetia, 1600) which appears with the legend, "Il Contrapasso fatto con vera mathematica".<sup>22</sup> (Figure 13)

Among the best organized of the early manuals on the use of the rapier is the *Ragione di Adoprar Sicuramante l'Arme si da Offesa, Come da Difessa* of Giacomo di Grassi (Venetia, 1570). Di Grassi begins his manual by defining a limited number of movements and positions to be used in this art; he then describes a variety of sequences arrived at by stringing these elements together. (Figure 14) The parallel in structure to the dance manuals of Caroso and Negri is clear, even though the specific movements Di Grassi describes are quite different. As with dance, the Italian style of rapier combat was highly influential in England, France and Germany, though each nation added its own distinctive elements. The Spanish, however, developed a largely independent fencing style characterized by an erect posture and very quick, crisp, motions of the feet. Dancers performing a choreography that is supposed to reflect Spanish influence, "Il Canario"<sup>23</sup> or "The Spanish Pavan"<sup>24</sup> for instance, would do well to study the imposing posture distinctive to the Spanish style of fencing.<sup>25</sup> (Figure 15)

The most detailed reference to swords within the major dance manuals of the late sixteenth century is in the final dance of Thoinot Arbeau's *Orchesography* (Lengres; 1589), the *Bouffons*

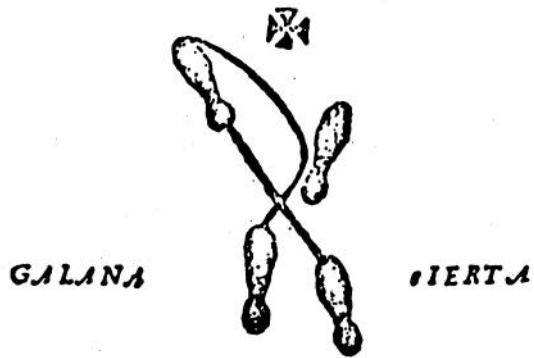


Figure 18 (Esquivel Navarro, *Discursos Sobre el Arte del Dançado* (Seville, 1642), p. 22 r.)



Figure 19 (Achille Marozzo, *Opera Nova* (Mutinae, 1536), p. 8v.)



Figure 20 (Vincentio Saviolo, *His Practise, In Two Books, The First Intreating of the Use of the Rapier and Dagger, The Second of . . . Quarrels* (London, 1595), vol. 1, p. 8r.)



Figure 21 (Joachim Meyer, *Gründliche Beschreibung der Freyen, Ritterlichen und Adeliichen Kunst des Fechtens* (Augspurg, 1600), part 2, p. 19v.)

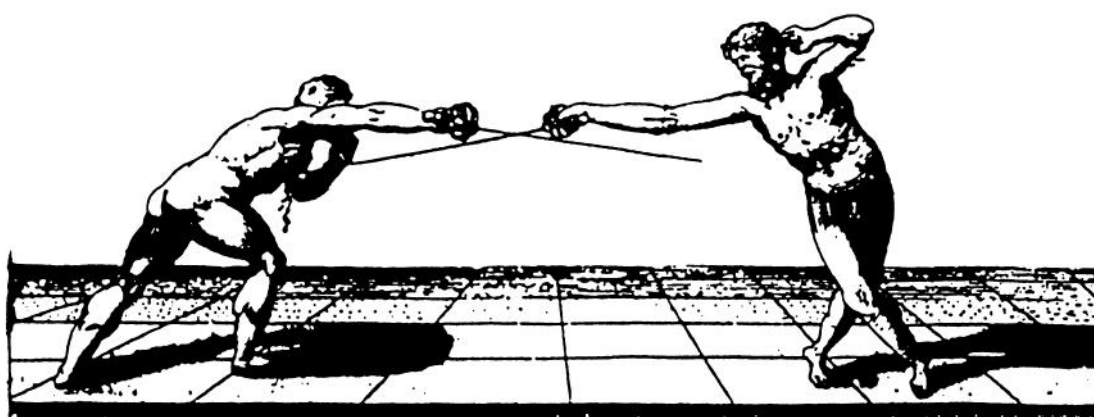


Figure 22 (Salvator Fabris, *De Lo Schermo overo Scienza d'Arme* (Copenhagen, 1606), plate 31, p. 59.)

or *Mattachins*.<sup>26</sup> Arbeau's description of this dance uses the standard terms of the day (in their French forms): high and low (*hault* and *bas*), cut and reverse cut (*taille* and *revers*), feint (*feicte*) and thrust (*estocade*). Each movement is illustrated and it is therefore not strictly necessary to have any other familiarity with arms to perform this dance. (Figure 16) On the other hand, the dance is a long one, and the many blows involved are something of a challenge to one not accustomed to the handling of a sword. The costumes that Arbeau depicts for this dance are clearly quaint and old-fashioned from the point of view of a sixteenth century gentleman. It is perhaps less obvious that the style of sword depicted, the emphasis on cutting blows, the feint with the edge rather than the point, the drawing back in preparation for the thrusts and the overall emphasis on cuts rather than thrusts would also have registered to a sixteenth century audience as quaint and old-fashioned.

In the area of notational devices, Henry de Saint Didier's *Traicte Contenant les Secrets du Premier Livre sur l'Espee Seule* (Paris: 1573) introduces the idea of having outlines of feet laid out on the ground with numbers showing the steps to be taken in executing a particular passage of arms. For instance, in figure 71/72, the Lieutenant on the left attacks, keeping his left foot on "1" while moving his right to "2", while the Prevost defends himself by deflecting the thrust of the Lieutenant while drawing the left foot back from "1" to "3", keeping his right foot at "2".<sup>27</sup> (Figure 17) This device does not appear to have had an impact at the time on either dancing or fencing manuals, though Esquivel Navarro has a single illustration of feet outlines showing the movement of the left foot during the gentleman's Reverence.<sup>28</sup> (Figure 18)

A more subtle device for showing foot placement is introduced in the fencing manual of Achille Marozzo, *Opera Nova* (Mutinae: 1536).<sup>29</sup> This consists of depicting the floor as a grid shown in perspective. By noting the position of each foot relative to the lines, the position of the feet relative to each other, as well as to the feet of the opposing fencer, can be discerned precisely. (Figure 19) This device is adopted by many of the most important fencing manuals of the next hundred years, including those by Vincentio Saviolo, Joachim Meyer, Salvator Fabris and Nicoletto Giganti.<sup>30</sup> (Figures 20–23) Turning to the dance manuals of Caroso and Negri, we note that they employ a similar gridwork in nearly all of their illustrations. (Figures 9, 10) The obvious interpretation here is that this gridwork is simply a representation of the large marble tiles found in many great halls, but the possibility exists that this is, as it appears to be in the fencing manuals, a deliberate attempt to specify depth. As with all the other issues raised above, this is an area where research has just begun, and there are many more questions to be asked before conclusive answers will be forthcoming.

The seventeenth century appears to be something of an extended transition period, both in fencing and in dance. Early in the century, these arts resemble those of the late sixteenth century, while later in the century we see a heralding of the dance and fencing forms that we associate with the eighteenth century. In the case of fencing, the new technique represents a change from the long rapier of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century to the delicate small sword of the eighteenth century. Looking briefly at the eighteenth century, we see a striking parallel in movement style between fencing and dancing. This is clear from a comparison of images in Pierre Rameau's *Le Maitre a Danser* (Paris, 1725) and Domenico Angelo's article (later reprinted as a book and translated into English) on "Escrime" published in *L'Encyclopédie . . . des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*, vol. 21 (Paris, 1765) of Diderot and D'Alembert.<sup>31</sup> Note the posture (and particularly the curve of the left arm and hand holding the hat) in Angelo's

Fig:29.

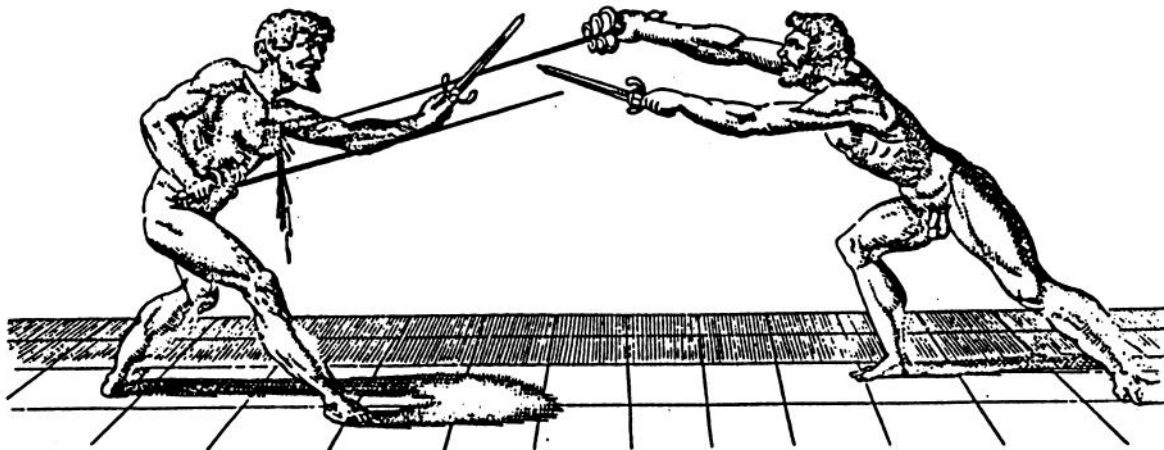


Figure 23 (Nicoletto Giganti, *Escrime Nouvelle ou . . . Diverses Manieres de Parer et de Fraper d'Espee* (Frankfurt, 1619), fig. 29.)



Figure 24 (Domenico Angelo, "Escrime", in: Diderot & D'Alembert, *L'Encyclopédie*, vol. 21 (Paris, 1765; reprinted 2002), fig. 12.)

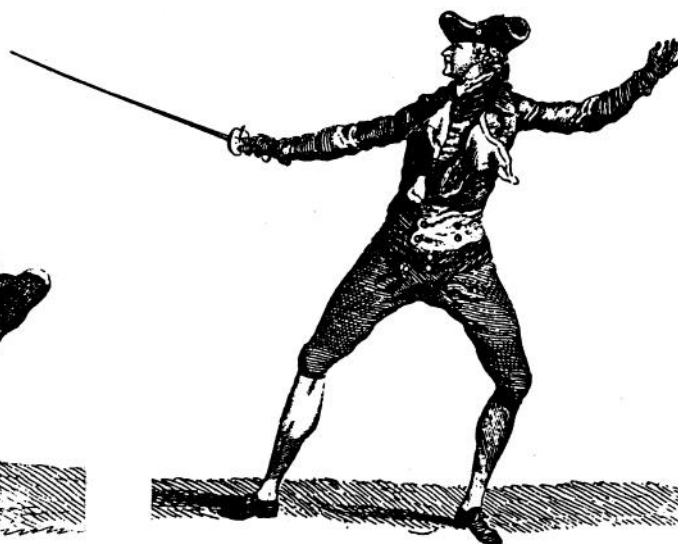


Figure 26 (Domenico Angelo, "Escrime", in: Diderot & D'Alembert, *L'Encyclopédie*, vol. 21 (Paris, 1765; reprinted 2002), fig. 3.)



*Homme et Femme prest a faire la premier Reverence  
avant de Dancer*

Figure 25 (Pierre Rameau, *Le Maitre a Danser* (Paris, 1725), opp. p. 62.)

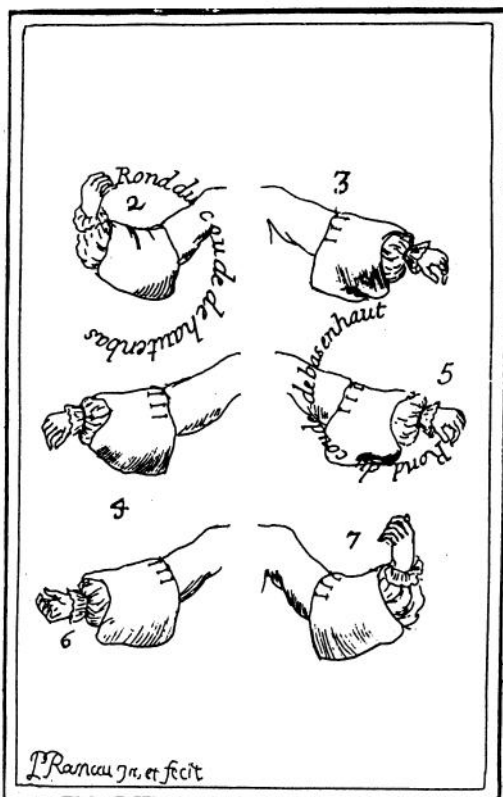


Figure 27 (Pierre Rameau, *Le Maitre a Danser* (Paris, 1725), opp. p. 212.)



Figure 28 (Pierre Rameau, *Le Maitre a Danser* (Paris, 1725), opp. p. 215.)



salute and Rameau's reverence. (Figures 24, 25) Note especially the curvature of the arms and hands in Angelo's guard position and Rameau's detail of hand positions and in his full figure illustrations (Figures 26–28). Angelo also depicts a bout between a small sword fencer and a Spanish fencer armed with a rapier. Even well into the eighteenth century, the Spanish apparently maintained their much earlier style of fencing. (Figure 29) I am not familiar with the dance forms popular in Spain in the mid-eighteenth century. I presume that the baroque court dances are being performed, but pose as a question whether there were other dances that displayed the firm and erect carriage that we most associate with sixteenth century Spain. One interesting feature of eighteenth century fencing is the introduction of the idea of fencing as a sport in and of itself, rather than as practice for combat. Angelo includes in his article an illustration of practice weapons and protective gear for this activity. (Figure 30)

In the nineteenth century, we see more and more emphasis on the idea of fencing as a recreation. Dancing also seems to become a less serious affair, as evidenced by the many mid-nineteenth manuals that suggest that one can learn the popular dances from manuals without the need of an instructor. The etiquette manuals of the day make clear that gentlemen are expected to be able to dance, but that they often cannot and even when they can, will not. As one manual put it:

“Thank you – aw – I do not dance,” is now a very common reply from a well-dressed handsome man, who is leaning against the side of the door, to the anxious, heated hostess, who feels it incumbent on her to find a partner for poor Miss Wallflower. I say the reply is not only common, but even regarded as rather a fine one to make. In short, men of the present day don't, won't, or can't dance; and you can't make them do it, except by threatening to give them no supper.<sup>32</sup>

Or another:

A young man, said the Abbé Meunier, who cannot dance, should go to battle and lose a leg with all possible expedition, as he will then have a palpable excuse for his awkwardness.<sup>33</sup>

The dances of this period are, moreover, rather easy when compared to the court dances of the eighteenth century, as one would expect of a popular activity open to a large proportion of the population.

Fencing manuals of the mid and late nineteenth centuries, like the dance manuals, are often far more accessible to interpretation by an inexperienced reader than the manuals of the eighteenth century, presumably in an attempt to democratize this activity as well. My favorite example of this is a book by the Baron de Bazancourt called *Secrets de L'Épée* (Paris, 1862; 1876). This manual was translated into English decades later as *Secrets of the Sword* (London, 1900). It is one of the few cases where the translation is far better than the original, though in this case the improvement is not to the text but results from the addition of many charming illustrations by the British artist F. H. Townsend, himself an amateur fencer. The book is presented as a fictional account (purportedly autobiographical) of an extended stay at a country manor by a group of gentlemen. The topic of fencing happens to arise in conversation, leading the author to remark:

But alas . . . to-day the sword and its secrets are almost forgotten, or at least but little valued. There was a time, and a time not so very remote, when a knowledge of

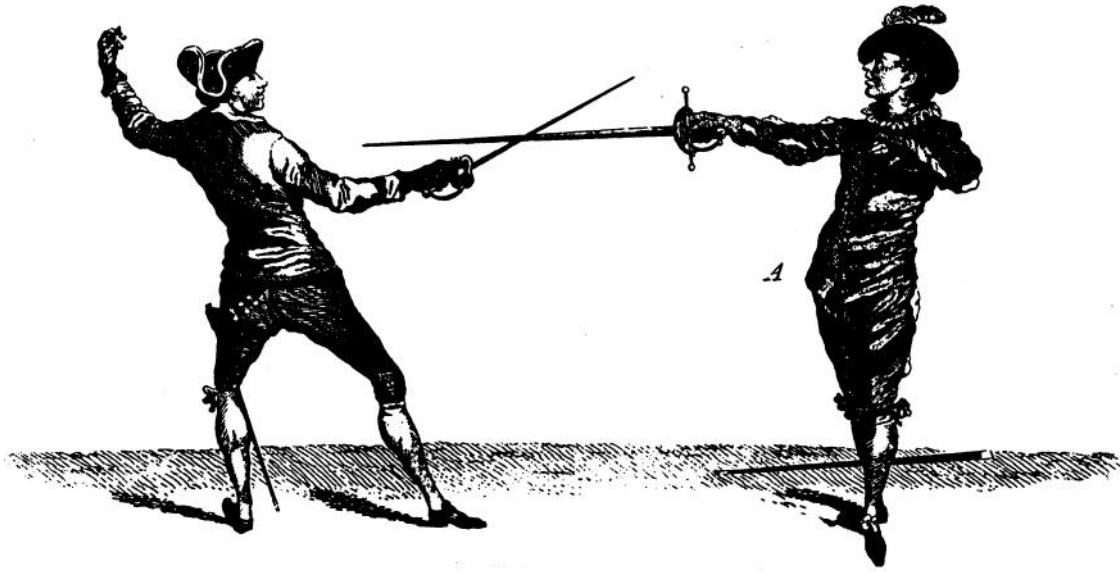


Figure 29 (Domenico Angelo, "Escrime", in: Diderot & D'Alembert, *L'Encyclopédie*, vol. 21 (Paris, 1765; reprinted 2002), fig. 43.)

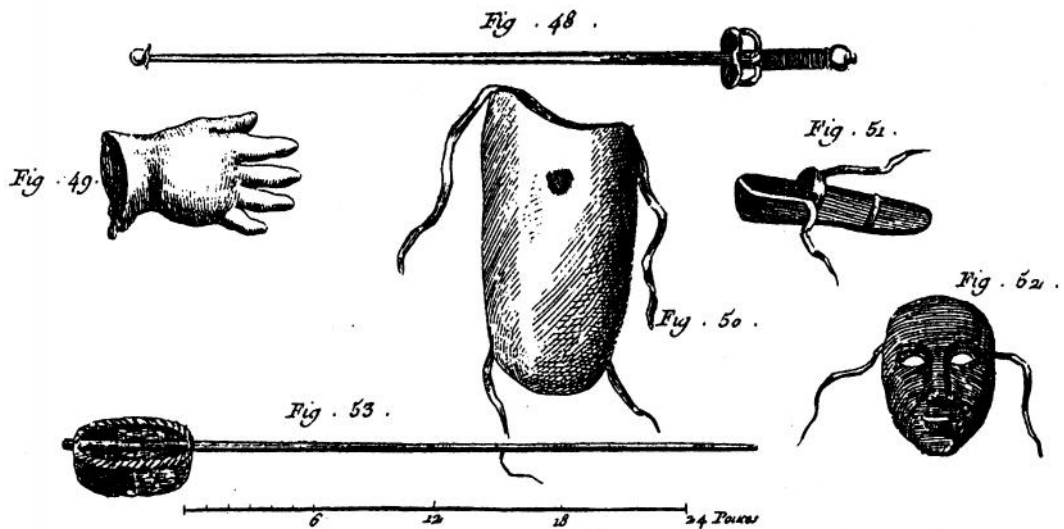


Figure 30 (Domenico Angelo, "Escrime", in: Diderot & D'Alembert, *L'Encyclopédie*, vol. 21 (Paris, 1765; reprinted 2002), fig. 48.)



*The instinctive position.*

Figure 31 (Baron de Bazancourt, *Secrets of the Sword* (London, 1900), p. 197.)



*The legs are springs.*

Figure 32 (Baron de Bazancourt, *Secrets of the Sword* (London, 1900), p. 39.)



*Keep the left shoulder back.*

Figure 33 (Baron de Bazancourt, *Secrets of the Sword* (London, 1900), p. 56.)

sword-play was considered one of the credentials of a gentleman. Apply that test now; apply it to yourselves. We have here in this room a large number of gentlemen met together, and I do not doubt that each one of you could make good his title to gentle birth . . . and yet how many of you would be seriously embarrassed if you were required to manipulate a sword! . . . I saw by the smile that went round the room that my remarks were only too well founded.<sup>34</sup>

The objection is made that it takes too many years of conscientious devotion to the art to become a credible fencer, to which our author replies, “Quite a mistake, I assure you.”<sup>35</sup> The author then endeavors over the succeeding evenings to teach the gentlemen present how to fence, in the course of which offering instruction to the reader. (Figures 31–34).

Although begun long before, it is in the nineteenth century that we see the clear distinction being made between social dance and dance as performed on stage. Interestingly, we also see by the mid-nineteenth century an interest in fencing and military drill exhibitions. One curious form of this was in exhibitions attempting to answer the question of which was the more formidable weapon, the saber or the bayonet. Contests addressing this question were apparently popular both in the United States and in England.<sup>36</sup> (Figures 35, 36)

I mentioned at the beginning of this paper that there were likely other areas of instruction manuals to which dance historians might want to turn for insights into their art. For the nineteenth century, two further (in addition to fencing) areas of likely relevance for which there are large numbers of primary source materials are etiquette and physical exercise. Historians of nineteenth century social dance have already noticed that etiquette manuals almost invariably include a full chapter on the dancing and the ballroom. Less attention has been placed to date on the second area, calisthenic and gymnastic exercise. The great popularity of these manuals in the mid and late nineteenth century is evidenced both by the many editions issued of select works, such as Dio Lewis’s *New Gymnastics for Men, Women and Children*,<sup>37</sup> (Figures 37, 38) and by the numbers of rival manuals issued.<sup>38</sup> Many authors of calisthenic manuals, including Dio Lewis, advocated performing exercises rhythmically to music, which raises the question of whether they should be classed as a form of dance in their own right. A particular form of calisthenic exercise that became popular, at least in the United States, was drill performed by teams of young people. One of the more curious drills, which brings me back to my other topic of fencing, was the broom drill in which young ladies learned military bayonet drill, but with a broom instead of a rifle.<sup>39</sup> (Figure 39) Late nineteenth century drill performed to music was also popular in Britain, as evidenced by works such as George Cruden’s *Manual of Physical Culture and System of Musical Drill* (Aberdeen: 1886). This work provides specific musical scores to be used for each type of drill, including Sword Exercise and Bayonet Exercise.<sup>40</sup> The extent to which sources such as these will lead to insights about dance movement in these periods will only become clear after more extensive research into these activities has been carried out.

## Notes

1. Sharp, Cecil J. *The country dance book, Parts 1–6*. London: Novello and Company, 1909–1922. Reprinted: Yorkshire, England: EPPublishing Ltd, 1975–1976.
2. For example:  
Chapman, Nellie. *Court Dances and Others*. London: J. Curwen & Sons, 1911.  
Kidson, Frank. *Dances of the Olden Time*. London: Bayley & Ferguson, 1912.

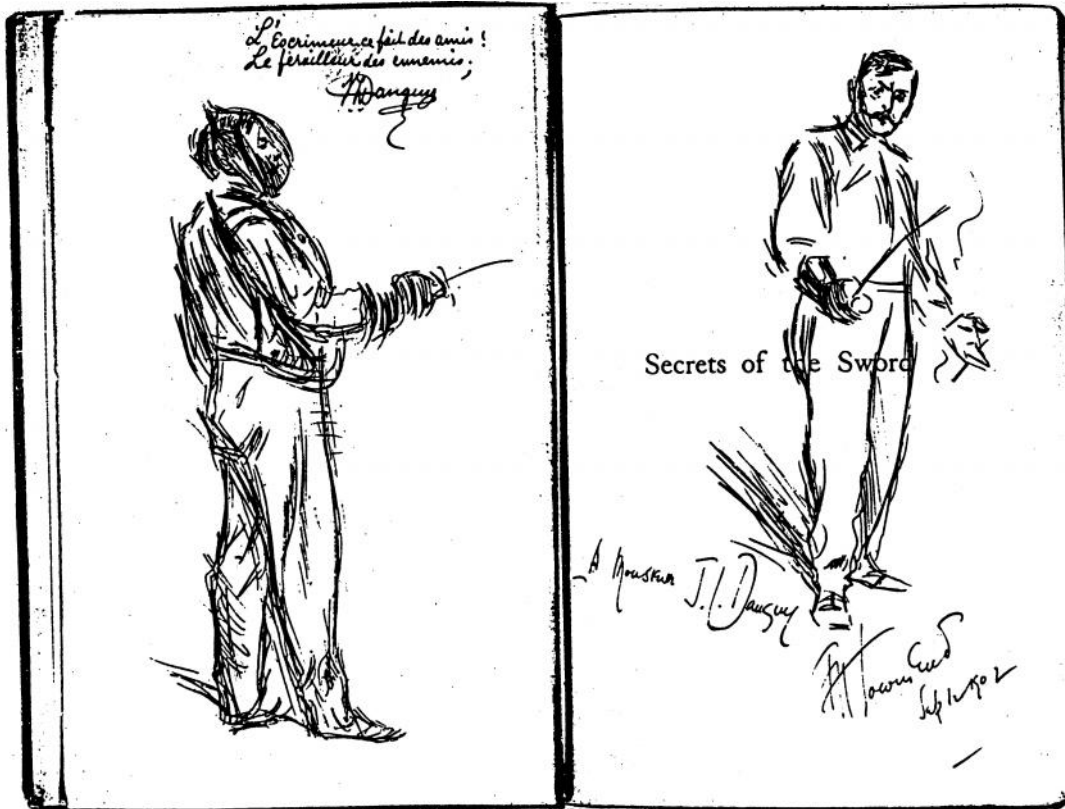


Figure 34 (Baron de Bazancourt, *Secrets of the Sword* (London, 1900), pen and ink drawings on flyleaf by Townsend in copy owned by P. J. Pugliese.)

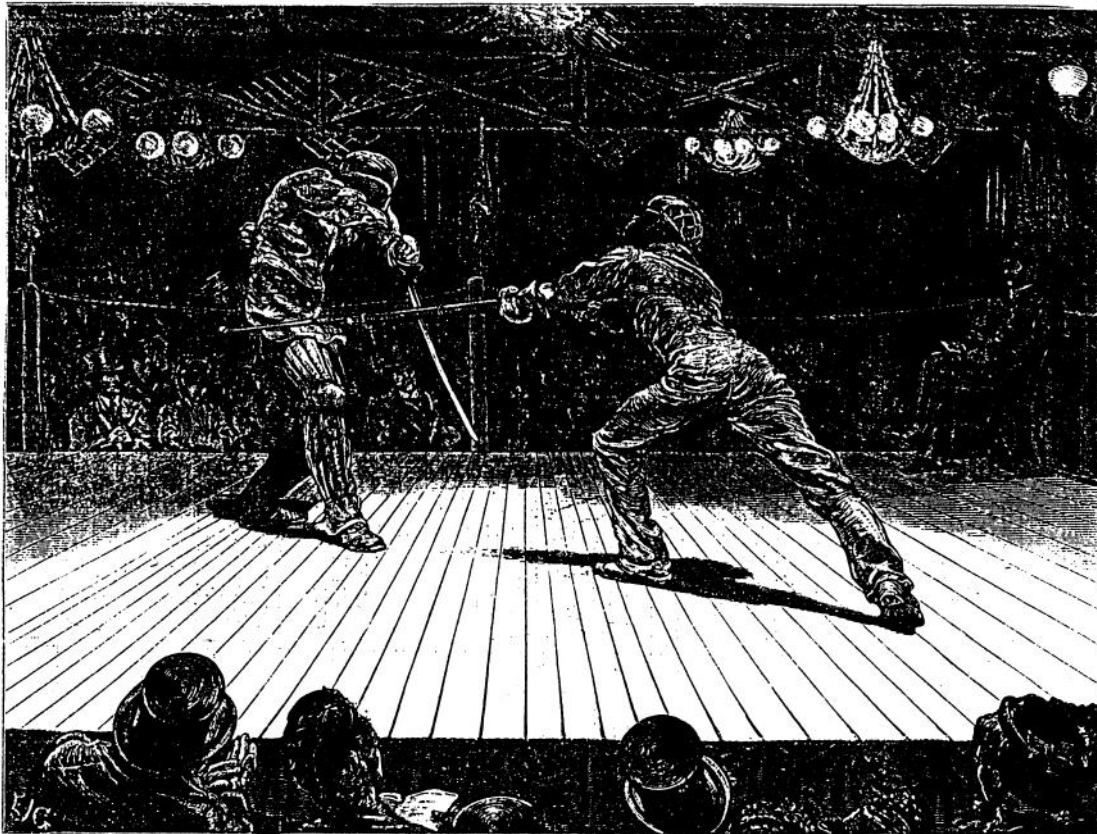


Figure 35 ("Sword versus Bayonet", *Harper's Weekly* (May 16, 1874), p.421.)



Figure 36 ("Notes at the Assault of Arms of the London Athletic Club", *The Graphic* (Dec. 5, 1874), p. 540.)

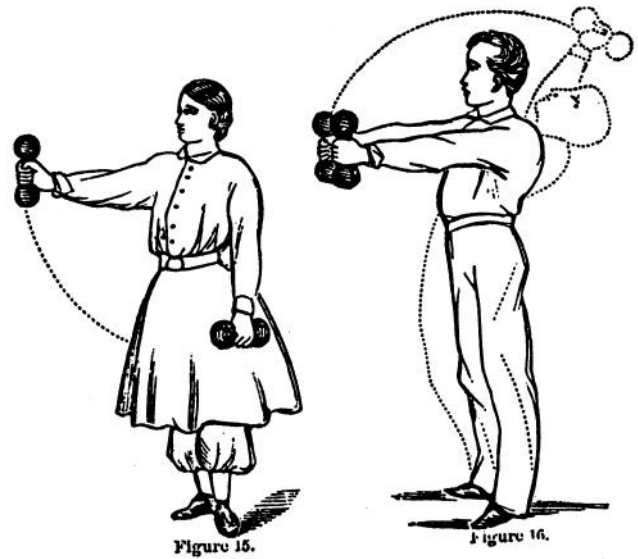


Figure 37 (Dio Lewis, *New Gymnastics for Men, Women and Children*, 8th ed. (Boston, 1864), p. 77.)

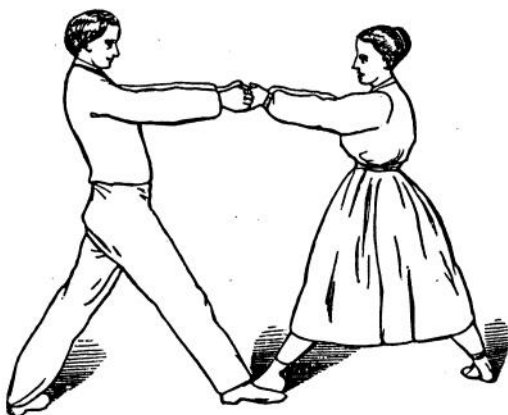


Figure 38 (Dio Lewis, *New Gymnastics for Men, Women and Children*, 11th ed. (Boston, 1872), p. 217.)



Figure 39 (Alfred M. A. Beale, *Calisthenics and Light Gymnastics for Home and School* (New York, 1888), p. 77.)

- Chapman, Nellie. *Elizabethan Dances*. London: J. Curwen & Sons, 1926.
3. Dolmetsch, Mabel. *Dances of England and France from 1450–1600*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949. Reprinted: New York: Da Capo Press, 1975.  
Dolmetsch, Mabel. *Dances of Spain and Italy from 1450–1600*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954. Reprinted: New York: Da Capo Press, 1975.  
Wood, Melusine. *Historical dances (twelfth to nineteenth centuries)*. 1952. Student edition: 1964. Reprinted: London: Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, 1972.
  4. Castle, Egerton. *Schools and masters of fence*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1885. New and revised edition: London: George Bell and Sons, 1892.  
Hutton, Alfred. *The sword and the centuries, or old sword days and old sword ways*. London: Grant Richards, 1901. Reprinted: Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1973.  
Hutton, Alfred. *Old sword-play, the systems of fence in vogue during the XVIth, XVIIth, and XVIIIth centuries*. London: H. Grevel & Co., 1892.
  5. The following are examples of the many organizations that have arisen in the past decade to address current interest in reviving early swordplay (and related combat activities) as a modern sport or western martial arts. Details on these and other organizations involved in like activities can best be found by searching the World Wide Web:
    - The Association for Renaissance Martial Arts (ARMA, formerly HACA)
    - The Academy of European Medieval Martial Arts (AEMMA)
    - The Association for Historical Fencing (AHF)
    - Swordplay Symposium International (SSI)
  6. The superficial search for early cases of modern movement activities not only shifts attention away from the richer issues involved in understanding historical movement in its own context, but can also lead to outright errors. Figure 1 (from Camillo Agrippa's treatise of 1553) has occasionally been credited as the first clear image of a fencing lunge. Agrippa's text, however, makes clear that the position shown was not achieved by the characteristic lunging movement forward with the right foot, but rather resulted from moving the left foot backwards, thereby lowering your body to evade an attack while allowing the attacking opponent to impale himself on your extended weapon. (Agrippa, Camillo. *Trattato di scientia d'arme*. Rome: 1553, f. 28r.)
  7. Website: <http://www.streetswing.com/histmain/z3bostn1.htm>. There is, of course, no guarantee that this website will remain long at this (or any other) web address.
  8. Negri, Cesare. *Le gratie d'amore*. Milan: 1602, p. 4. Reprinted and translated: Kendall, Gustavia Yvonne. '*Le gratie d'amore*' 1602 by Cesare Negri: translation and commentary. Final Project for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts, Stamford University, 1985. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1985, p.28.
  9. *Ibid.*
  10. *The Dancing Times*, Nov. 1922, N.S. #146. It is difficult to find more recent cases of this direct association of dancing and fencing. The most popular western social dances of the later part of the twentieth century tend to emphasize freedom and spontaneity of movement over precisely controlled disciplined actions. It is not surprising that people favoring these dance forms should be disinclined to put up with the rigors and frustrating feelings of awkwardness that often accompanies early lessons in fencing.



11. Feuillet, Raoul-Auger. *Recüeil de contredances mises en choregraphie*. Paris: 1706. Reprinted: New York: Broude Brothers, 1968, p. 15.
12. Essex, John. *For the furthur improvement of dancing. . . translated from the French of Mons. Feuillet*. London: 1710. Reprinted: Westmead, England: Gregg International Publishers, 1970, p. 9.
13. Feuillet, Raoul-Auger. *Recüeil de contredances mises en choregraphie*. Paris: 1706, p. xv. (See Figure 2)
14. Marcelli, F.A. *Regole della scherma*. Rome: 1686, p. 90. (See Figure 3)  
 Hope, William. *Scots fencing master, or compleate small-swordman*. Edinburgh: 1687, following p. 24. (See Figure 4)  
 Le Sieur de Liancour. *Le maitre d'armes*. Amsterdam: 1692, following p. 20. (See Figure 5)  
 Mazo, Bondi di. *La spada maestra*. Venice: 1696, fig. 39. (See Figure 6)  
 Blackwell, Henry. *The English fencing-master*. London: 1705, p. 14. (See Figure 7)
15. Meyer, Joachim. *Gründliche Beschreibung der Freyen, Ritterlichen und Adelichen Kunst des Fechtens*. 2nd ed. Augspurg: 1600, vol. I, ff. 30r, 35r, 50v, 53v, 54r.
16. Meyer, Joachim. *Gründliche Beschreibung der Freyen, Ritterlichen und Adelichen Kunst des Fechtens*. 2nd ed. Augspurg: 1600, vol. I, f. 59r. Quotation is from an unpublished translation by Jeffrey Forgeng, Curator at the Higgins Armory Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts. The word “step” in brackets at the end bears the translator’s note: “*Schnitt*; read *Tritt*.”
17. Pugliese, Patri J. “Issues in fencing and dancing in the late sixteenth century”. In: Ravelhofer, B. [ed.], *Terpsichore 1450–1900, International Dance Conference, Ghent, Belgium, 11–18 April 2000, Proceedings*. Ghent: The Institute for Historical Dance Practice, 2000.
18. A portion of this material dealing with sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is an abridgement of material covered in the earlier paper referred to in note 17, above.
19. Caroso, Fabritio. *Il ballarino*. Venice: 1581. Reprinted: New York: Broude Brothers, 1967. Most figures show gentlemen with swords, including that on p. 31r. (See Figure 9)  
 Caroso, Fabritio. *Nobilta di dame*. Venice, 1600. Translated by Julia Sutton. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986. As in his earlier book, most gentlemen are shown wearing swords. Several of the plates are copies of those in his earlier book, including that shown in Figure 9.  
 Negri, Cesare. *Le gratie d'amore*. Milan: 1602. Most figures show gentlemen with swords, including that on p. 256. (See Figure 10).
20. Caroso, Fabritio. *Nobilta di Dame*. Venice: 1600, pp. 65–66. Translated by Julia Sutton. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 134–135.
21. The most extreme dependence on geometrical constructions as a foundation for the science of arms arises in the Spanish school. This is discussed in a recent article by the fencing master and fencing historian Ramon Martinez. Martinez gives examples of the movimientos, or movement segments, of the Spanish school. He refers briefly to the Spanish dance manual of Esquivel Navarro, *Discursos sobre el arte del dancado* (Seville: 1642), and its reliance on the concept of movimientos developed within the Spanish science of arms, but without providing detailed

- examples. (Martinez, Ramon. "Spanish Fencing from the 16th to 18th Centuries", *Hammertz Forum*, August 1999, 5 (2, 3).
22. Caroso, Fabritio. *Nobilta di dame*. Venice: 1600, p. 241.
  23. Caroso, Fabritio. *Il ballarino*. Venice: 1581, pp. 179r–180v.  
Negri, Cesare. *Le gratie d'amore*. Milan: 1602, pp. 197–202.
  24. Arbeau, Thoinot. *Orchesography*. Lengres: 1589. Translated by Mary Stewart Evans with a new introduction by Julia Sutton. New York: Dover Publications, 1967, pp. 181–182.
  25. In general, the Spanish manuals were not well illustrated. The major exception to this is the manual on the Spanish style written in French by Gerard Thibault d'Anvers, *Academie de l'Espee* (Leyden: 1628). Thibault's manual is a large folio volume with plates that fill the double opening. Note in Figure 15 the many geometrical lines on the plate that define the space between a fencer and his opponent. A translation of this manual into English is in progress by John Michael Greer who has been making parts of this translation available over the past several years.
  26. Arbeau, Thoinot. *Orchesography*. Lengres: 1589. Translated: New York: 1967, pp. 182–195.
  27. Saint Didier, Henry de. *Traicte . . . sur l'espee seule*. Paris: 1573, p. 57v. (See Figure 17)
  28. Navarro, Esquivel. *Discursos sobre el arte del dançado*. Seville: 1642, p. 22 r. (See Figure 18)
  29. Marozzo, Achille. *Opera nova*. Mutinae: 1536, p. 8v. (See Figure 19)
  30. Saviolo, Vincentio. *His practise, in two books, the first intreating of the use of the rapier and dagger, the second of . . . quarrels*. London: 1595, vol. I, p. 8r. (See Figure 20)  
Meyer, Joachim. *Gründliche Beschreibung der Freyen, Ritterlichen und Adelichen Kunst des Fechtens*. Augspurg: 1600, part 2, p. 19v. (See Figure 21)  
Fabris, Salvator. *De lo schermo overo scienza d'arme*. Copenhagen: 1606), plate 31, p. 59. (See Figure 22)  
Giganti, Nicoletto. *Escrime nouvelle ou . . . diverses manieres de parer et de fraper d'Espee*. Frankfurt: 1619, fig. 29. (See Figure 23)
  31. Pierre Rameau, *Le maitre a danser*. Paris: 1725. Reprinted: New York: Broude Brothers, 1967.  
Domenico Angelo, "Escrime", in: Diderot & D'Alembert, *L'Encyclopédie*, vol. 21 (Paris, 1765), reprinted in facsimile as: *Recueil de planches . . . art de l'escrime*, Tours: Bibliothèque de l'Image, 2002.
  32. Anon. *The habits of good society: a handbook for ladies and gentlmen*. New York: Carleton, 1865, p. 227.
  33. Brookes, L. de G. *Brookes on Modern Dancing*. New York: L. de Garmo Brookes, 1867, p. 11.
  34. Baron de Bazancourt, *Secrets of the sword*. Translated by C. F. Clay, with illustrations by F. H. Townsend. London: George Bell & Sons, 1900, pp. 6–7.
  35. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
  36. "Sword versus Bayonet", *Harper's Weekly*. 16 May 1874, p. 421. (See Figure 35)  
"Notes at the Assault of Arms of the London Athletic Club". *The Graphic*. 5 Dec. 1874, p. 540. (See Figure 36)

37. I have specifically consulted the following two editions:  
 Lewis, Dio. *The new gymnastics for men, women, and children*. 8th edition: Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1862. 11th edition: Boston: James R. Osgood, 1867. (I have seen reference to a 17th edition: Boston: Houghton, Osgood & Co., 1878.)
38. The following is only a sample of some of the most popular calisthenics manuals of the mid-nineteenth century:  
 Forrester, Francis. *Minnie's playroom; or, how to practise calisthenics*. Boston: Rand & Avery, 1853.  
 Beecher, Catherine E. *Physiology and Calisthenics for Schools and Families*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1856.  
 Trall, R.T. *The illustrated family gymnasium*. New York: Fowler & Wells, 1857.  
 Watson, Madison. *Hand-book of calisthenics and gymnastics*. New York: J.W. Schermerhorn, 1863  
 Jacques, D.H. *Philosophy of human beauty; or, hints toward physical perfection*. New York: Miller, Wood & Co., 1867.  
 Cunningham, Duncan. *Calisthenics and drilling simplified for schools and families*. London: Haughton & Co., n.d. [ca. 1875].
39. Beale, Alfred M. A. *Calisthenics and light gymnastics for home and school*. New York: 1888, pp. 71–83.(See Figure 30)  
 Barnett, Capt. Jos. H. *Barnett's broom brigade tactics and fan drill*. Chicago: David C. Cook, 1890. Reprinted: Springfield, Massachusetts: M&M, 1978.
40. Cruden, George. *Manual of physical culture and system of musical drill*. 10th ed. Aberdeen: Alexander Murray, 1902, pp. 215–228, 247–258. The author refers in the preface to the original edition of 1886 and to various subsequent editions.

