

MEYER DUSSACK

- *The Dussack in Motion* -

2014

v.1.2

Roger Norling



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*“With this weapon extend far and long,
hang over forward after the cut.
With your body step far as well;
send in your cuts powerfully around him.
To all four targets let them fly;
with comportment and pulling you can deceive
him.*

*You shall parry in the forte,
And meanwhile injure him with the foible.
Also you shall come no nearer
than where you can reach him with a step.
When he is about to run in at you,
the point drives him from you.
But if he has run in on you,
with gripping and wrestling you shall be the
first.*

*Pay heed to the forte and foible,
'Instantly' makes the openings apparent.
Also step correctly in the Before and After;
watch diligently for the right time,
and do not let yourself be easily unnerved.”*

PERSONAL PRESENTATION

To begin with I would like to briefly introduce myself. I am the quarterstaff instructor of Gothenburg Historical Fencing School (GHFS) in Sweden, and I am also a member of the Meyer Frei Fechter Guild (MFFG) and the Historical European Martial Arts Coalition (HEMAC). I am also the Chief Editor of HROARR.com and publish most of my research there.

My personal focus is on the teachings of Joachim Meyer and by extension also the context he lived and worked in, as well as the masters that he appears to have studied or be in the same fencing “tree” as, like *Hs. 3227a*, *Sigmund Ringeck*, *Martin Syber*, *Hans Talhoffer*, *Jörg Wilhalm*, *Andres Paurñfeyndt*, *Johannes Leküchner* and *Achille Marozzo*. My main focuses are the longsword, the dusack and the quarterstaff.

This workshop article is an attempt at teaching the very basics underlying Meyer’s dusack fencing, to give a foundation to continue working with his actual techniques from.

The illustrations have been quite crudely cropped and I apologize for it, but hope they will serve well enough to help understand what the text attempts to describe.

ABOUT JOACHIM MEYER

Joachim Meyer was most likely born in 1537, in Basel, Switzerland. His father, Jakob may have been a knifsmith, just as Joachim would later become. Joachim became noted as a burgher when becoming a knifsmith of Straßburg in 1560. If he just had moved to Straßburg or grew up there is currently unclear. He was also a fencing master in this city, teaching and arranging several *fechtschuler* (tournaments) in the 1560s. Interestingly, another Basel-born knifsmith and fencing master named Hans Jakob Meyer would also request to arrange a tournament in Straßburg in 1564. It is currently unclear if this is a relative of Meyer, but it appears to be too much of a coincidence.

Meyer may have had experience of war as all male burghers of his time had to both own weapons and armour, as well as serve in the town militia as “police”, firemen, soldiers and honour guards, according to ability. This of course required training, and since times were quite troublesome with constant religious strife and conflict, many men would need to use their training in real life and death situations, both in civilian or military context.

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He wrote three or four treatises with one currently being lost. The three are the *Duke von Solms treatise* completed in 1560 or -68, a printed treatise in 1570 entitled "*Gründliche Beschreibung der Freyen Ritterlichen und Adeligen Kunst des Fechtens*" and an uncompleted treatise in 1571, called the *Rostock Treatise* or Ms Var.82.

The printed 1570 book was reprinted in 1600, 1610 and 1660 and was also copied by *Jakob Sutor* in 1612, and *Theodori Verolinus* in 1679. In this book he directs himself towards *young men* and *experienced soldiers* alike and it teaches the *longsword*, the *dusack*, the "war" *rappier*, *grappling*, *dagger*, *quarterstaff*, *halberd* and *pike*.

Interestingly Meyer appears to be one of the few masters that we clearly can prove to having studied several treatises of earlier fencing masters.

The last so called "Rostock" treatise contains copies of the fencing treatises of *Martin Syber*, *Sigmund Ringeck*, *Martein Hundtfelts*, *Jud Lew*, *Andre Liegniczzer* and handles the *longsword*, *armoured fighting*, *fighting on horseback*, *dagger*, *sword & buckler* and *war rappier*.

The dagger illustrations, finally, bear a strong resemblance to the illustrations in the treatise of *Achille Marozzo* and one can be quite certain that at least the illustrators had access to copies of these.

There are several indications that Meyer may have received part of his training in the *Marxbrüder*, which in his time was the only officially recognized fencing guild within the Holy Roman Empire. However, he also appears to have been instrumental in founding of the *Freyfechter* fencing guild and he includes a *Freyfechter Zettel* (List of verses) in his treatise.

In 1570/71 he accepted a position as a fencing master at the court of the *Duke of Mecklenburg* in Schwerin but while travelling there in cold winter February of 1571 he got ill and died shortly after arriving. His last treatise was thus never completed and ends in the middle of a page.

SPORT OR REAL MARTIAL ART?

For a long time in modern HEMA his teachings have been regarded as a sportified version of the *Liechtenauer* tradition by those who focus on the earlier sources, despite Meyer himself clearly directing himself towards *soldiers* and including many lethal and maiming techniques that would never be allowed in a *fechtschul* or other sports contexts, like breaking of arms, thrusting into the face and testicles, striking at hands etc, etc. All weapons that he teaches in his printed treatise are still common on the battlefields of his time, apart from the slightly anachronistic rondel wood dagger portrayed in his treatise. Some techniques that he mentions are also described specifically for the battlefield. Still, large parts of his teachings would likely have been used in a civilian context too, a context where thrusting was considered dishonorable and where striking with the flat was a necessary skill as initially striking with the flat would prove your intent to avoid escalating a violent conflict and therefore could mean the difference between severe punishment and standing clear of blame and guilt.

Most controversial in Meyer's teachings is the seeming lack of thrusting with the longsword, which can be perceived as a break with the earlier tradition. This is all the more confusing since he thrusts with all other weapons, and does so with the clear intent to maim and kill, but with the longsword, the thrust is only used as a *threat* to cause the opponent to move in a certain fashion so you can attack him in a created "opening".

However, in my belief, there is a *pedagogical* and *practical* reason for this, closely tied to the structure of teaching in the Renaissance fencing guilds. We do not have full details for how this structure was in the Marxbrüder or the Freyfechter guilds, but the English *Company of Maisters of the Noble Science of Defense*, who were strongly inspired by the German guilds and provably used near identical ceremonies etc, follow Meyer's treatise exactly, starting with the longsword, continuing with the dusack, rapier, dagger and ending with the polearms. This is also the general structure of Austrian Freyfechter *Andre Paurñfeyndt's* treatise of 1516. I would suggest this structure is tied to *concerns for safety of the students*, so the safer weapons are used first, i.e. the *longsword* which can be better controlled with two hands than a single-hand sword, then the *dusack* which has a safe wooden training sword to use. - These two are again in Meyer's time the two most popular weapons in his region. Then he moves on to the, in his time, increasingly more popular *war rapier*, then the *dagger* and finally the most dangerous and hard to learn of them all; the *polearms* - a weapon type that has little civilian use apart from town guard duty.

This structure makes sense, since no master in their right mind would ask two beginners to attempt to stab each other in the face straight away. That would leave him with precious few students very quickly.

It has also been suggested that the longsword is no longer in use by Meyer's time, but this is provably wrong. It was still commonly carried both by some civilians and soldiers and can be seen alongside of the large two-hand *Schlachtschwert* in battlefield illustrations well into the 30 Years War. And the Montante is taught for war and civic duty as late as in 1651 by Dom Diogo Gomes de Figueiredo.

It is also my belief that the staff was used to train the use of the *Schlachtschwert*, a weapon that for military purposes served the same function as the halberd and which is commonly seen in contemporary depictions used with the left hand leading, just as the staff and halberd are taught.

Regardless, while Meyer *thrusts* rather rarely with the longsword, he does turn the *winding* (Winden) into a great art by teaching many, many ways of using the bind for controlling the opponent's blade and striking from the bind.

Finally, Meyer adds a whole layer of *tactics* and strategies, working with *psychology* and *mind games*, something which is often missing from earlier treatises. In many ways, it is reminiscent in parts of Meyer's near contemporaries *Myamoto Musashi's* famous Book of Five rings or *George Silver's* books on fencing, only with techniques and terminology more clearly explained and exemplified.

His tactical and strategical advice includes the following:

- ***Attack first***
 - Take the initiative and don't wait for the opponent to attack you. It is better to force him to respond to what you do than the opposite.
- ***There are three different types of cuts: Provoking – Displacing – Hitting.***
 - Most exchanges include at least two of these, in any order. Some strikes displace and hit at the same time. Others just perform a single of these functions at a time, but can be used in all three ways. Provoking is a way of controlling your opponent by giving him an idea about what is "right" to do. That way you are ahead of your opponent already and can treat him in whatever way you like.

- ***Transform a cut into a thrust and a thrust into a cut***
 - It is quicker and better to move the shortest, or the quickest way. From a cut it is better to keep the point in line and thrust from the inside or the outside. However, from a failed thrust it is often better to use the momentum of the opponent's parry to strike around, especially for one handed weapons.
- ***If he tends to cut wide: Void and counterattack with quick cuts or thrusts.***
 - For opponents who strike overly hard and wide; just step out of range and as his sword is over-extended, then attack quickly to whatever body part you can reach.
- ***If he tends to void and counterattack: Provoke and feint.***
 - Likewise if you face an opponent who likes to fight like the above, then instead work with provocations; threaten with thrusts and strikes in, or slightly out of range to force the opponent to move in a certain fashion, thus revealing a new opening that he will find it hard to defend quickly, which you then attack. Both Silver and Musashi speak of this too, although from slightly different perspectives.
- ***Always cut from the sword to the body and the body to the sword.***
 - You always have to be ready to control the opponent's weapon and body after you land an attack, since you can't trust your attack to incapacitate him immediately.

Likewise, as you strike or parry you will be revealing an opening that is difficult to protect quickly. Consequently this is the opening that is the most attractive for your opponent and you have to be ready to protect it.

- ***Withdraw with a threat***
 - Following from the above you also have to make sure that you not only bind your opponent's weapon after a successful attack, but also that you withdraw in a manner that discourages the opponent from attacking you, either with extended sword, a thrust or a strike.

- ***Don't do things you can't do in a real, dangerous situation.***
 - Meyer states that we all think differently and thus fights differently. There simply isn't a single best fighting style and there are as many styles as there are fighters. But not only that, he also discourages us from using techniques that are difficult for us in a situation where we need to rely on them, since not all techniques are for everyone. Our bodies, lack of training etc will hinder us in executing some of them properly, which means it would be suicidal to use them in a real fight.

THE DUSACK

The dusack has often been mistaken for being no more than a wood & leather training weapon, commonly used by Renaissance fencers, when in fact it was a weapon of war, a proto-sabre with a complex hilt. In a way it is basically a modernized *kriegsmesser* (*large war knife*), improved upon possibly to accommodate a growing need resulting from the intensifying wars against the *Ottoman* cavalry who commonly carried sabres.

It is similar to the Italian *Storta* and may well have been popularized by the Swiss whose notorious *Reißläufer* were a strong inspiration for the German Landsknechter, even serving as an official role model for them and using Swiss instructors to train them. However, these soon became common all over Europe and e.g. the Norwegian *King Christian IV* armed his peasants by importing 8.000 dusacke from Switzerland in 1589. As early as in 1539, they are mentioned alongside of Schlachtschwerter (two handed war sword) in Sweden.

Meyer himself describes the dusack as “The most common weapon among Germans, after the longsword.” When describing it he states that it has its basis in Longsword, but that it also teaches the Rappier. And this is part of the genius of Meyer’s teachings; how everything connects and strengthens one another. Dagger techniques are implemented into the staff, and longsword into the dusack, rappier and staff, back and forth.

The dusack would remain in use in the fencing guilds, alongside of all other weapons that Meyer teaches all the way into the late 1700s, but the actual war dusack would with time transform into a proper sabre.

WHAT THIS CLASS IS AND ISN'T

In this class you will learn the following:

- *How to use varied grips of the dusack*
- *How to step both in attack and defense.*
- *How to strike continuously both from above and below at the four openings, while training to stay safe and quickly counter with another strike.*
- *How to parry continuous strikes coming from an aggressive opponent using simple combinations of stances and cuts.*
- *How to step in for grappling*
- *How to counter grapplers*

BASICS

GRIPS

There are three ways of gripping the dusack which make certain strikes and techniques easier.

NORMAL "HAMMER" GRIP

This is where you hold your dusack with a closed fist with the thumb pointing towards your knuckles. It is simple and natural to use and allows the dusack to strike freely, but gives less control over the dusack.

EXTENDED THUMB GRIP

Here, you extend the thumb forwards on top of the blade, which will give you better control over the point of the blade, both when striking but also when parrying. It also allows the whole hand to move a finger's width forwards inside the grip, furthermore increasing your control. On a real steel dusack the cross would prohibit such a grip, but many war dusacker had a thumb ring onto which you would extend your thumb, for increased control.

SIDE GRIP

Here you let the grip twist 90 degrees in your hand so you can rest your thumb on the flat of the blade. It allows you to strike from the side with the "short" edge of the blade, e.g. at the opponent's weapon in a "Krumphauw" like fashion.

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GUARDS & STANCES

The guards should not be regarded as *fixed positions*, but rather as *crossroads for choosing different actions*, as you study how your opponent acts and reacts. They are ideal positions for *change* and are where you should strive to end *as you attack* and *as your attacks are parried*. You should not remain in them for long. Meyer states only for a “blink of an eye” and it is on your way *into* a guard that you observe and decide what to do, *not* when you are in them.

However, you *can* remain in guard longer too, commonly in order to bait and fool your opponent into attacking an opening you are giving him, thus controlling his actions through psychology.

Meyer describes all this in the following words:

1.31R

Now as regards the postures, I would not have you remain long in any of them, since they are not invented or devised for this purpose, but so that when you draw up your sword for a stroke, and it is time for you to cut in the middle of pulling up as you gather your joints, you will know how to send your sword at once quickly back against him when you reach the furthestmost point in drawing up your sword.

However, this is the reason that even experienced fighters sometimes linger in a guard, namely that you not only should undertake no cut or stroke thoughtlessly, but also that after you have pulled up and gathered yourself for this stroke, and at that moment shall send the stroke forth, you shall linger in that furthestmost point for just a bit, almost only for the blink of an eye, to reconsider whether it is worth completing your intended stroke, or whether in the meantime a better opportunity has arisen for you, so that you should change it at the furthestmost point to another cut, and complete the High cut, for which you have pulled up, with a Thwart.

This is the chief cause of the invention of the postures, and therefore he who sometimes lies in a posture should see what the intention of the other one is, so that he may know better how to catch him in his own devices. This does not happen unless he observes and is sure of his intention; for this watching demands art and great experience, etc.

Here are the main guards. Most can be done on both sides, but generally the right foot is to be kept forward for a right handed fencer, and the rear foot at 90 degrees to the lead foot.

GUARDS

WACHT



SCHNITT



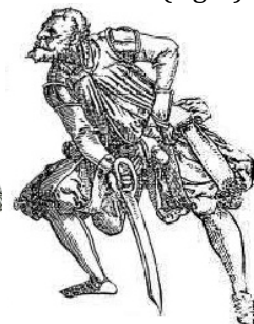
LANGORT



BASTEY (Alber)



WECHSELHUT (left) &
NEBENHUT (right)



EINHORN



STIER



EBER



BOGEN



MITTELHUT

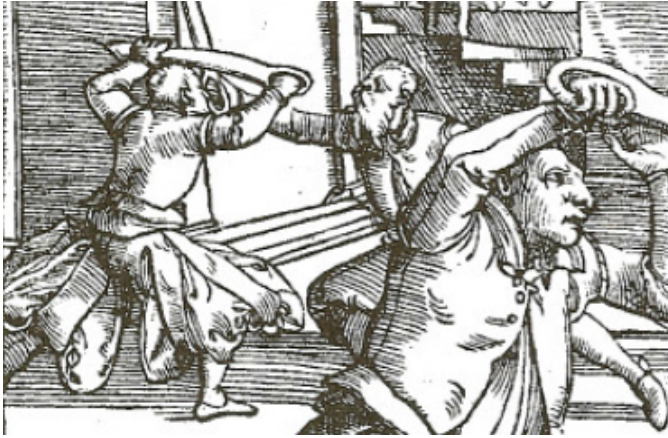


ZORNHUT



HALBSCHWERT

LEFT



RIGHT



VIDILPOGE



Stances should generally be with your weight centered over the hips and in between the feet for best control in movement. Leaning of upper body is done to all directions for better reach or to evade attacks, and weight can then also be shifted towards the two feet, even centering the weight *over* or *in front of* one of them.

All guards fit into a natural flow that connect *full* or *half cuts*, cutting in the shape of an "X" - with the "crossing point" at the target, and *thrusts*, and the guards thus fit into various cutting and thrusting patterns that can be combined together. Meyer describes it with the following words:

And you shall well note here (as I have also said previously) that the postures must be understood not merely as a position in which to wait for the opponent's fighting, but much more as a beginning or end of the cuts and parrying. So for example when you are standing in the Bow, if you will now strike out of the Bow, then in gathering for the cut you come up into the Watch or Steer; and when you pull your dusack around your head for the stroke, then in pulling around you come through the Wrath Guard; from there the cut is first completed; then when you have completed the High Cut, if you do not go through to the side with the cut, you come at the end of it into the Change; if you will parry up from there, then you come into the Bow, or into the Longpoint.

Now this is the chiefest reason for the invention of these postures, that when you pull up into a posture for a cut, you can change it while you are still in the air, and turn or send it to another opening; also when you pull up for a cut, that at the furthestmost point into which you come with pulling up, you can tarry an instant to see whether he will cut at your opening as you cut, so that you may perceive in the air whether you can reach him over his incoming cut by cutting simultaneously over it.

Nonetheless you shall tarry no longer in any posture than as long as it takes to gather for the stroke, but always change off from one posture into another, until you perceive opportunity to cut. (2.18R-2.20R)

Some examples of this are:

CUTTING

WACHT



SCHNITT



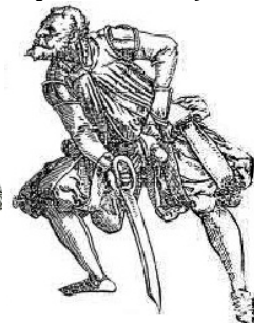
LANGORT



BASTEY (Alber)



NEBENHUT (right, but here depicted as left)



EINHORN



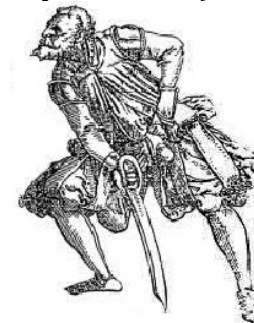
STIER



BOGEN



NEBENHUT (right, but here depicted as left)



MITTELHUT (right, but here depicted as left)



ZORNHUT



THRUSTING

ZORNHUT



EINHORN



STIER



EBER



GRAPPLING

EBER



VIDILPOGE



HALBSCHWERT LEFT



HALBSCHWERT RIGHT



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STEPPING

For a left handed fencer, most actions start and end with the right foot leading. However, there are some exceptions in this, particularly with certain guards *like Right Einhorn, Right Stier, Eber, Bastey, Right Zornhut and Right Mittelhut*, which all lead with the left foot instead. The tendency seems to be to prefer to work with the guards that let you lead with the right foot though. And to make it even more complicated, the position of the feet is not prioritized over the position of the weapon and arms, which is natural since it is more important to protect oneself than to stand “correctly”. Consequently, in Meyer’s treatise fencers are several times depicted leading with the wrong foot forward, causing a “crossed” stance.

There are three basic steps forwards and backwards and they can be used both when attacking and when defending.

THE GATHERING STEP

When advancing the rear foot is moved forwards right next to the leading foot, before stepping forward with the lead foot. When retreating you do the opposite, and move backwards with your leading foot before retreating the rear foot.

THE PASSING STEP

Here the rear foot passes the leading foot in a long “normal” step somewhat to the side. Try to maintain your hips at the same height throughout the movement. This is how you step when attacking from the Eber, Zornhut etc.

THE TRIANGLE SIDESTEP (VOLTA)

This is a small twisting of the whole body, where the rear foot is moved out to a 45 degree angle, giving you a better “line” towards the opponent.

This step can also be quickly followed by a regular step with the leading foot to complete a wider sidestepping.

SINGLE DRILLS

*... and when you are cutting ... avoid holding your arm 'in the bosom' (as they say), i.e. not fully extended from you; for he who fights short and holds his arms near him is easy to deceive and hit, although the stretching out must also have its moderation and limit according to the situation of the moment.
Therefore I particularly wish to advise you, if you want to make this book useful for yourself, that you will above all things learn to deliver the cuts fluidly, long, and well... (2.14V)*

BODY & WEAPON'S MECHANICS

The exercises in this chapter are based on Meyer's own description of how to work with cuts through the vertical, diagonal and horizontal lines. He describes the first parts of this with the following words.

Stand with your left foot forward and hold your dusack in the Steer, as shown by the large figure on the left in the previous image [B]. Step and cut straight from above down through the vertical line, as far as the Midpoint where the lines cross over each other; thus you stand with your arm extended in the Longpoint, concerning which see the large figure also on the left in the image on the following page [C]. From there, let the foible of your dusack drop and run off toward your left, and at the same time as your foible drops, pull your hilt up with hanging blade around your head for a stroke; meanwhile as you pull up your dusack for another cut, then at the same time also pull your rear foot up to the forward right one, so that you have another full step forward with your right foot to go with the cut you have prepared.

Cut as before through the vertical line, yet no further than to the crossing of the lines, into the Longpoint. From there, gather to cut as before; and do this one cut to three or four forward. As many cuts as you deliver forward, you shall also execute the same number of cuts and steps backwards again; and as you have drawn the rear foot up to the forward foot in cutting forward, so that you can step further forward with the front foot, likewise when you will step backward in cutting, you must also give ground with the front foot as far back as the rear one, as you pull up to the stroke; and as you have previously stepped forward for the stroke with your right foot, so you must now step back in cutting with your rear left one. (2.4v.1)

NOTE

The exercises below should be done to both sides, and both advancing and retreating. Make sure to step in good balance with your weight centered so you can stop at any time.

CUTS DIAGONALLY FROM ABOVE

1. Start with the left foot leading and the dusack in the position of *Eber* or *Stier*.
2. **Make a provoking thrust:**
Without actually stepping, shift your weight forward *quickly* as you thrust forward and extend as far as possible and let the rear foot slide towards your leading left foot.
3. Let the point fall with the short edge down to your side into *Bogen*.
4. Pull the dusack around your head into *Wacht*, and strike down diagonally from above into *Langort*, as the step is completed.
5. **Make a new attack:** Gather your rear foot close to your forward foot and let the point fall with the short edge down to your side into *Bogen* and then up into *Wacht*.
6. Step forward while cutting diagonally down, making sure that you reach *Langort* right when your foot lands.
7. Repeat from #5 while advancing or retreating continuously

CUTS VERTICALLY FROM ABOVE

1. Start with the left foot leading and the dusack in the position of *Eber* or *Stier*.
2. **Make a provoking thrust:**
Without actually stepping, shift your weight forward *quickly* as you thrust forward and extend as far as possible and let the rear foot slide towards your leading left foot.
3. Let the point fall with the short edge down to your side into *Bogen*.
4. Pull the dusack around your head into *Wacht*, and strike down diagonally from above into *Langort*, as the step is completed
5. Let the strike continue all the way down by your side and up again into *Stier* on the other side.
6. **Make a new attack:** Gather your rear foot close to the forwards foot and let the point drop into *Bogen* and make a *moulinet* into *Wacht*.
7. Cut down from the other side.
8. Repeat from #5 while advancing or retreating continuously.

HORIZONTAL CUTS

1. Start with the left foot leading and the dusack in the position of *Eber* or *Stier*.
2. **Make a provoking thrust:**
Without actually stepping shift your weight forward quickly as you thrust forward and extend as far as possible and let the rear foot slide towards your leading left foot.
3. In the same movement, pull the dusack upwards with the short edge to your side through *Schnitt* ...
or
Let the point fall towards your side into *Bogen* ...
... and cut towards the "head" making sure that you reach the impact point right when your foot lands.
4. **Make a new attack:** Gather your rear foot close to your forward foot and raise the point into *Schnitt* again, or let the point fall with the short edge down to your side into *Bogen* and then up through *Wacht*.
5. Step forward while cutting again towards the "head" making sure that you reach the impact point right when your foot lands.
6. Repeat from #4 while advancing or retreating continuously

CUTS DIAGONALLY FROM BELOW

1. Start with the left foot leading and the dusack in the position of *Eber* or *Stier*.
2. **Make a provoking thrust:**
Without actually stepping, shift your weight forward *quickly* as you thrust forward and extend as far as possible and let the rear foot slide towards your leading left foot.
3. Raise your point towards your side diagonally up with the short edge up to your side into *Schnitt*.
4. Pull the dusack around your head into *Wacht*, and strike up diagonally from below with the long edge, as the step is completed.
5. **Make a new attack:** Gather your rear foot close to your forward foot, while raising your point towards your side diagonally up with the short edge up to your side into *Schnitt*.
6. Pull the dusack around your head passing through *Wacht* and strike diagonally up from below, as the step is completed.
7. Repeat from #5 while advancing or retreating continuously.

REVERSED CUTS DIAGONALLY FROM ABOVE

1. Start with the left foot leading and the dusack in the position of *Eber* or *Stier*.
2. **Make a provoking thrust:**
Without actually stepping, shift your weight forward *quickly* as you thrust forward and extend as far as possible and let the rear foot slide towards your leading left foot.
3. Let the point fall with the short edge down to your side into *Bogen*.
4. Pull the dusack around your head into *Wacht*, and strike with the *short* edge down diagonally from above, as the step is completed.
5. **Make a new attack:** Gather your rear foot close to your forward foot and while pulling back the dusack a bit into *Bogen* and then continue up into *Wacht*.
6. Step forward while cutting diagonally down with the short edge, as the step is completed.
7. Repeat from #4 while advancing or retreating continuously

DOUBLE CUTS DIAGONALLY FROM ABOVE

1. Start with the left foot leading and the dusack in the position of *Eber* or *Stier*.
2. **Make a provoking thrust:**
Without actually stepping, shift your weight forward *quickly* as you thrust forward and extend as far as possible and let the rear foot slide towards your leading left foot.
3. Let the point fall with the short edge down to your side into *Bogen*.
4. Pull the dusack around your head into *Wacht*, and strike with the *long* edge down diagonally from above, as the step is completed.
5. **Make a new attack:** Gather your rear foot close to your forward foot and while pulling back the dusack a bit into *Bogen* and then continue up into *Wacht*.
6. Step forward while time cutting diagonally down with the *short* edge, making sure that you hit when your foot lands.
7. Gather your rear foot close to your forward foot and while pulling back the dusack a bit into *Bogen* and then continue up into *Wacht*.
8. Step forward while this time cutting diagonally down with the *long* edge, making sure that you hit when your foot lands.
9. Repeat from #5 while advancing or retreating continuously

PARTNER EXERCISES

2.17R -2.17r.2

These two parryings are each executed in two ways, firstly by catching or intercepting the stroke, secondly by cutting away. Now catching is simply when you intercept and hold off your opponent's strokes with parrying, whether it be with the Bow from the Low Cut, or with Straight Parrying from the High Cut. However, you shall not understand this parrying as some do it, namely that they merely hold out their weapons and let them be struck upon; but if you want to catch and parry an opponent's stroke, then you shall send your parrying up from below with extended arm against his High Cut in the air; for the higher you catch his cut in the air, the more you weaken it...

These exercises are done the same way as the single drills, only with the difference that the defender gathers the feet and moves into *Schnitt* or *Bogen* as the attacker strikes. Also the defender needs to step back from the initial provoking thrust described above.

STATIC EXERCISES - TAKING TURNS

In this exercise you attack with one strike and then the opponent attacks, so you take turns with a single attack. Both parties stand still when doing this first partner exercise.

1. Parry upwards with an *Entrüsthauw* (Armour Cut) into *Bogen*.
2. Add parrying into *Stier* or *Einhorn* in upwards motion

STATIC EXERCISES – ONE DEFENDING

Likewise if you wish to parry the Low Cut, then you shall go from above against the cut, and fall on it with extended arm. Both these parryings end in the Longpoint...

(2.17R -2.17r.2)

Again, in this exercise both parties stand still. However, the attacker makes continuous strikes that the defender parries.

1. Parrying cuts from below with an *Entrüsthauw* in a downwards motion into *Schnitt*.
2. Parry with any stance upwards or downwards.

DYNAMIC EXERCISES

In this exercise, both parties step while attacking and defending. At first, it is best to keep moving in a single direction. So while both parties strikes and parries the same way, one party will be doing it while stepping backwards.

1. Attack with *Oberhauw* forwards and defend in *Bogen* or *Stier/Einhorn*. Defend backwards the same way.

CLOSING IN AND COUNTERS

Meyer doesn't really wish for us to rush to grappling when using the dusack, which can be seen for instance here:

However since I do not much approve of running in with the dusack, I will let it be here for now. (2.49r.2)

However, he still teaches a few techniques on how to do it. Make sure to provoke your opponent into giving you an opening for it by first causing him to strike from above.

LOCKS AND CLOSING IN FOR GRAPPLING: THE *ENTRÜSTHAUW* & *BOGEN*

Example A – Block, lock and strike

1. Block or prevent an *Oberhauw* (High Cut) with an *Entrüstthauw* (Armour Cut) into *Vidilpoge* (Fiddle Bow) with left hand supporting the blade near your right hand.
2. Move left hand *in front* of your blade and grab the opponent's weapon or hands or wrap your arm around it.
3. Thus locked, strike to his left side with the blade or pommel.
4. Grapple or step out with a strike or in *Langort* (Long Point).



Example B – Block, lock and thrust

1. Block or prevent an Oberhauw with an *Entrüstthauw* into *Vidilpoge* with left hand supporting the blade near your right hand.
2. Move left hand to the opening *in between* yourself and your blade and grab the opponent's weapon or hands, or wrap your arm around it.
3. Thus locked, thrust or slice to your opponent's face or throat from the outside over his arm.
4. Grapple or step out with a strike or in Langort.



From Albrecht Dürer's "Fechtbuch".

COUNTERS TO GRAPPLERS

Meyer doesn't fully approve of people who over-rely on the use of rushing in, especially those who do it clumsily, and speaks of it with the following words:

There are some who, once they have fully protected their arms with all kinds of clumsy work, are accustomed to take their head between their arms and run right under the opponent's weapon. Since you must concern yourself with his falling in from above, and dare not make yourself open with any technique, you shall use three kinds of techniques against him. (2.48r.1-r.3)

He then offers us a few examples of how to counter such "brawlers" and gives us the following three tips.

EXAMPLE A - ATTACK THE FACE OR SCALP

Firstly when he thus runs under your weapon, then at the same time go up with your arm also, and remain up with parrying; and while you both have your arms up, strike with the crooked edge in a flick at his face, Secondly if he wards this off, then send your point outside around his arm and strike with the crooked edge outside his right arm at his head, as shown by the small figures between the large ones in the previous Image G. (2.48r.1-r.3)

1. When the opponent parries your strike in the *Bogen* and either remains or pulls back for an *Oberhauw* (High Cut)
2. Then step in, control his arms and flick your point and short edge down over his arms towards his face with a strike or thrust.
3. If he blocks it, then step out to the other side, flick the blade around and strike or thrust with the short edge to his face on the other side over his right arm.
4. Grapple to control him or step out with a strike or in *Langort*.



EXAMPLE B – ATTACK THE NECK

Item, keep both hands high and hold your left over your head near his hilt; and meanwhile before he realizes it, strike him quickly under his left arm behind at the nape of his neck. Concerning this see the small figures on the left in the same image [G]. (2.48r.1-r.3)

1. When the opponent parries your strike in the *Bogen* and either remains or pulls back for an *Oberhauw* (High Cut), step in even closer and grab his hands. Press them back above his head to unbalance him.
2. Lean in towards his chest and strike around his left side towards his neck or back of the head diagonally from below.
3. Grapple to control him or step out with a strike or in *Langort*.



FINAL WORDS

This has been a very simple introduction to some of the most basic principles underlying Joachim Meyer's dueling fencing. For further learning I highly recommend you to get yourself a copy of *Dr. Jeffrey L. Forgeng's* excellent translation into English of Meyer's 1570 treatise. Currently the book is out of print, but at the time of writing, May 2014, a reprint is planned for January 2015.

I would also like to thank *Dr. Forgeng* in particular for allowing me to so liberally quote from his translation.

A huge thanks also to my partner in crime; *Mattias Moberg*. Thanks for putting up with my fascist tendencies that pop up when teaching together.

Please don't hesitate to send me any questions you may have regarding this article or the associated workshop. You can reach me at contact@hroarr.com

I also strongly recommend you to follow the writings of the great authors publishing their work at www.hroarr.com the very impressive historical fencing magazine *Acta Periodica Duellatorum*, available at www.actaperiodica.org and finally the wonderful work so many people do at the truly unique Wiktenauer.com site.

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Gothenburg, Sweden