

TRAINING BOOKLET

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended as an aide-mémoire for students of Les Maîtres d'Armes in their study of the Art of Armizare. It is not a complete study guide, and is to be used in conjunction with regular training.

In addition to presenting the relevant information for ranks and curriculum, it contains a glossary of terms (Appendix B) as well as providing brief descriptions of the required drills and techniques in the form of synoptic tables. A tracking grid is also provided such that the student can track his/her progress and take notes.

As the student progresses, they will be provided with further sections to add to their training binder, forming a complete personalised reference work for the student. The purpose of these guides is to lend structure to the training program, and to make clear the expectations, directions and goals of training.

I'd like to thank Greg Mele of the Chicago Swordplay Guild & Sean Hayes of Northwest Fencing Academy for their help and input into these guides.

DISCLAIMER

The practise of any martial art is a serious endeavour, and not to be undertaken lightly. Since the possibility of injury is a looming spectre, due diligence must be taken to ensure the safety and health of those practising this art. In light of this, we cannot be responsible for the actions and interpretations of those using this text outside of the confines of our Salle d'Armes, and urge the utmost caution when applying any portion of this work. The techniques described herein are designed to seriously injure an opponent when applied with speed and force. As such, we cannot reiterate the need to place safety first enough when applying any of these techniques.

CONVENTIONS USED IN THE TEXT

For the sake of simplicity and clarity, the masculine is used throughout. Please substitute the feminine wherever necessary. Also for the sake of clarity and simplicity, we assume a right-handed practitioner. Left-handedness requires adaptations to the techniques, but the principles apply regardless of handedness.

Dei Liberi divides his manuscript into illustrations depicting distinct techniques, counters and follow-up techniques that are referred to as “plays” (It. zhogi). The characters illustrated in the plays are known as Players (It. zugadore), and take the form of the Masters It. Magistri, Scholars, Remedy Masters, and Counter Remedy Masters. For the sake of this work, we will use the terms Player and Companion in order to denote the person demonstrating the technique described and the person being subjected to the technique, respectively.

Dei Liberi's manuscript is replete with technical terms such as the names of guards, cuts, etc. However, there was no consistent use of spelling throughout the manuscript. Given this, we have chosen one spelling for any particular term and tried to remain consistent throughout, in an attempt to avoid confusion. For instance, Dente di zenghiar is variously spelled as zenchiar, zenghiaro or cinghiale. It is noteworthy that other works may not adhere to this method, and so the student should make note of the disparate spellings found throughout the corpus of dei Liberi's works.



THE SCHOOL

HISTORY

The school began in 2005 with a rather eclectic curriculum, based largely on material from the German school of swordsmanship, albeit a disparate array of sources. Those sources ranged from Sigmund Ringeck's longsword (Tobler) Christian Tobler, Secrets of German Swordsmanship, Hans Talhoffer's manuscript Mark Rector, Medieval Combat, and the ubiquitous Codex Wallerstein (Grzegorz Zabinsky) were primary sources, with a smattering of Fiore dei Liberi thrown in from the Pisani-Dossi manuscript.

Since then, the curriculum has been continually refined and now focuses on a single master and his works, and a formal training regimen has been installed to further the development of our students. As the nature of Historical martial arts is one centred around interpretation, this body of work is constantly evolving to reflect our better understanding of the material.

SCHOLARLY PURSUITS

Apart from practising the physical and martial aspects of the Art, Les Maîtres d'Armes is dedicated to continuing research into the historical martial arts. As such, we continue to develop interpretations based on period texts, work on translations of period manuscripts and encourage our students to pursue projects that will benefit the school and the larger community. Work is ongoing in translating and interpreting various manuscripts, with a particular focus on the Italian tradition.

MISSION

Les Maîtres d'Armes mission is to create, maintain, and pass down a tradition of l'arte dell'armizare by actively researching, interpreting and promoting the Arte. By research, we mean the careful and complete study of the art and its historical context from primary sources. Interpretation is the art of taking that research and developing an instructional and martial system using said research. Promoting the art means to develop martial artists that are both willing to excel in their chosen path of study and that are keen on continuing to research period methods and techniques through pedagogical, scholarly and practical means with the stated purpose of preserving Armizare as a complete, traditional, yet living and functional martial art.

VALUES

We value integrity, respect, and unity. These are ideals we strive to uphold in all our interactions both within the sala and without.

VISION

Our vision sees the school as a leader in creating a martial tradition of excellence, founded on the tenets of the canon left us by Maestro Fiore dei Liberi, for future generations to refine and preserve.

HERALDIC ARMS AND LOGO

The logo, a gironny of eight (divided into eight parts), represents the eight basic directions for footwork, the eight basic cuts and is a symbol representing unity. The school's motto "Veritas in Arte" translates to "Truth in Art," as an homage to the medieval and renaissance concept of "Art" as a science in and of itself. The logo is simply a stylised rendering of our (assumed) heraldic arms.

SOURCES

The Art that we practise in the sala is the Art of Armizare as set forth by Fiore dei Liberi in his 1410 treatise(s) the Fior Bataglia (Flower of Battle). His works represent an advanced holistic fighting system for combat in and out of armour, with or without weapons.

This primary source material may be supplemented with other historical or modern sources. In the interests of integrity and intellectual honesty, sources for material taken from outside the canon of Armizare will usually be stated as such.

THE TRADITION

The Italian martial tradition is rich in its diversity, spanning centuries, from the first known Italian treatise by Fiore dei Liberi through the Renaissance Bolognese sidesword traditions and their accompanying rapier lineages to living traditions still practiced today. Our particular lineage is one descended from Maestro d'Armi Fiore dei Liberi, for which we have four known treatises directly attributed to him, one in his continuing lineage (Fillipo Vadi) and several derived works. We will visit the first two masters in this lineage below. L'arte dell'armizare is a comprehensive martial system useful in a variety of contexts, and with a number of weapons.

FIORE DEI LIBERI

Sir Fiore Furlano de Civida d'Austria delli Liberi da Premariacco (ca. 1350s - 1410s), was a Medieval master of arms, and the earliest Italian master from whom we have an extant martial arts manual. His work, the il Fiore di Bataglia, or "Flower of Battle," is the earliest known Italian fighting manuscript, and is also the third oldest fighting manual yet discovered (after the MS I.33 and the HS 3227a). Furthermore, it is the only medieval Italian manuscript to feature armoured combat as well as being the most extensive from the Medieval period. As such, he is one of the most significant figures in the Historical European Martial Arts.

Fiore dei Liberi's manuscripts date to roughly 1409 (1410 by today's calendar). We can only speculate as to whether any of the four exemplars were written by him or by his one of his students, and they are not all dated to the same year, although 1409 is a good marker for our purposes. The manuscripts contain techniques for sword, dagger, pollaxe, spear and even armoured and mounted combat.

Fiore dei Liberi tells us that he was the son of Sir Benedetto delli Liberi of Premariacco, a minor noble from the Friuli region of modern-day Italy, and was born in Cividale del Friuli. Evidence suggests he

was a commander in the civil war on the side of the alliance of towns. In 1395, he can be placed at a duel fought in Padua, and in 1399, he was recorded in Pavia. At some point thereafter, he became associated with Niccolò III d'Este, Marquis of Ferrara, Modena, and Parma, though the nature of this association is unclear.

Fiore dei Liberi wrote that he had a natural inclination to the martial arts and began at a young age. Later he studied under many Italian and German masters of arms. He named only one of these, a Master Johannes "called Suveno" (possibly 'the Swabian' or 'of Swabia'), who was himself a scholar of Master Nicholai of Toblem. There is some evidence leading researchers to speculate that Johannes ditto Suveno may have been the German grand master Johannes Liechtenauer.

He mentions that, on five separate occasions, he was forced to fight lethal duels for his honour against other masters, who he described as envious because he refused to teach them, and survived each without taking any wounds.

He states that he began writing *Flos Duellatorum* (the Pisani-Dossi MS) on February 10, 1409, and noted in its prologue that he had studied the arts of combat for more than 50 years. Based on the customary age of martial arts instruction for the nobility, it is estimated that Fiore was born around 1350. His death date is also an estimate as there are no known records of his life after he completed his book.

Fiore's teachings greatly influenced many of the Italian masters who came after him, most notably Filippo Vadi, as well as certain of the later-period German masters including Ludwig von Eyb.

Four copies of the illuminated manuscript are currently known to have survived into the 20th century, and there are records of two others whose current locations are unknown. The MS Ludwig XV 13 and the Pisani-Dossi MS are both dedicated to Niccolò III d'Este and state that they were written at his request and according to his design, although the latter has completely different text from the former. Available evidence suggests the Pisani-Dossi may have been written after Fiore dei Liberi's death. The MS M.383, on the other hand, lacks a dedication and claims to have been laid out according to his own intelligence. The MSS Latin 11269 lost any dedication it might have had along with its prologue.

Two now-lost manuscripts by Fiore dei Liberi existed in the Estense family library during and after Niccolò d'Este III's reign. The larger is almost certainly the presentation copy given to Niccolò. The smaller manuscript is something of a puzzle. Neither of them matches the four surviving manuscripts in physical description or page count:

- Codex LXXXIV is noted in two catalogs of the Estense family library in Ferrara, one from 1436 and one from 1508, after which no information is known. The manuscript is described as 58 folios bound in leather with a clasp, with a white eagle and two helmetson the first page. This contains more pages than any of the surviving copies.
- Codex CX is noted in the same two surveys of the library. This manuscript is described as 15 small folios on unbound parchment, with each page having two columns. This MS has smaller pages, and fewer of them, than any of the surviving copies.

STRUCTURE OF THE MANUSCRIPTS:

Each of the extant copies of the Flower of Battle follows a distinct order, though both of these pairs contain strong similarities to each other in order of presentation.

The major sections of the work include:

- abrazare, which are unarmed plays (usually translated as wrestling but more properly grappling – literally “the art of the embrace”);
- daga, including both unarmed defences against the dagger and plays of dagger against dagger;
- spada a un mano, the use of the longsword in one hand (also called "the sword without the buckler");
- spada a dui mani, the use of the longsword in two hands;
- spada en arme, the use of the longsword in armour (primarily techniques from the halfsword);
- azza, plays of the pollaxe in armour;
- lancia, spear and staff plays; and mounted combat (including the spear, the longsword, and mounted grappling);
- Spada a cavallo, Sword and lance on horseback.
- A brief bridging section serves to connect each of these, covering such topics as bastoncello, or plays of a small stick or baton against unarmed and dagger-wielding opponents; plays of longsword vs. dagger; plays of staff and dagger and of two clubs and a dagger; and the use of the ghiavarina against a man on horseback.

Two of the manuscripts, the Pisani-Dossi and “Getty,” seem to follow a pedagogical layout (from foot combat to horseback), while the other two seemingly prefer to follow the order of a duel (mounted combat to foot combat.) Filippo Vadi, while being 70 years later, is a clear continuation of the lineage, and while he eschews mounted combat – reflecting the tendencies of the period – his work is clearly derivative, with similar techniques illustrated throughout. His primary contribution, however, is in the introductory textual material where he explains previously untreated material such as the theory of parrying and other such important topics.

The manuscripts are all laid out according to a specific structure, ingenious in its simplicity and clarity. Each group of plays, or techniques, and its counters are organised using visual devices identified as masters, remedy masters, counter-remedy masters, etc. The beginning of each section illustrates the “First masters” or “masters of battle,” depicting the overarching lessons for the section. These are followed by the guards inherent to each weapon. The plays then begin with a “remedy” master, illustrating the defence or remedy against the most likely attack or attacks from the Companion

(representing the first master). This remedy master wears a gold crown to signify his importance. Techniques deriving from this remedy are identified as “scholars” of that remedy master and wear a device in the form of a gold garter around the leg. Once the scholar’s plays have been exhausted, there may be a counter-remedy master, wearing both a crown and a garter to signify his opposition to the scholar. The next remedy master begins anew with the gold crown as a device, and the process continues.

FAMOUS STUDENTS OF FIORE

Fiore tells us of six of his students, all knights or squires (squires were fighting noblemen who were not knighted; in equipment, training and employment they were virtually indistinguishable from knights). Each of the six was well-known in his day, and are still known to history, as condottieri – mercenary captains of arms in late Medieval Italy. They are:

The previously-mentioned Galeazzo da Mantova: “the famous, valiant and hardy knight Galeazzo di Capitani from Grimello, better known as Galeazzo da Mantova,” who fought Marshall Bouccicault in Padua. Galeazzo was a member of the famous and powerful Gonzaga family, and his relative, Francesco Gonzaga, was the lord of Mantua.

Piero del Verde, a German knight, who fought Piero della Corona, also German, in Perugia.

Nicholas von Urslingen, another German knight, who fought Nicholas the Englishman in Imola.

Lancilotto da Beccaria, a squire from Pavia, who fought six passes of the blunted lance on horseback, “against the valiant German knight Baldassarro.”

Giovannino da Baio, a squire from Milan, “who had to face the valiant German squire Schramm for three passes of the blunted lance on horseback in the castle of Pavia. The same also had to fight three blows of the axe, three of the sword and three of the dagger—on foot—in the presence of the noble prince and lord the Duke of Milan and her ladyship the Duchess, as well as numerous other lords and ladies.”

Azzo da Castelbarco, knight, who fought in separate combats Giovanni Ordelaffi and the knight Jacomo di Boson.

In claiming these men as his students, Fiore is assuring Niccolo that his claims to skill as a teacher are not boasts, but grounded in a reality that his patron could readily understand – and as readily verify. You don’t use a powerful and important man such as Galeazzo da Montova as a reference if you can’t back it up.

FILLIPO VADI

Fillipo Vadi was a master of arms in the court of the Duke of Urbino and arguably Fiore dei Liberi’s successor. His manuscript *Liber de Arte Gladitoria de Dimicandi* (“Of the Art of Swordsmanship”), published c.1482-1487 borrows heavily from the *Fior di Bataglia*. Many of the images are reminiscent

of, if not identical to, his predecessor's work.

Vadi's value is in the precursor text to the images, which seem to follow in the vein of the Pisani-Dossi manuscript, with otherwise very sparse textual instructions. This wealth of theoretical and of course, philosophical, material bring us explanations for the left-foot forward parries shown in Fiore. In fact, it is the first manuscript to make use of the term "parry" or *parata*. It also discusses combination attacks, the *mulinello* and *stramazzone*, and features a discussion on *mezzo tempo* not found until later Bolognese texts.

The Fundamentals curriculum does not make direct use of Vadi's material, but it does influence the instruction of the various techniques and is presented as the continuation and extension of the *dei Liberi* tradition.

VON EYB/DIE BLUME DIE KAMPFS

The "Blume die Kampfs" (Flower of Battle) series of manuscripts are of German origin, but are clearly derivative of Fiore dei Liberi's work. The manuals in this group are the Codex 5278 (ca. 1420), the "von Eyb" (ca. 1500) and the Codex 10799 (ca. 1623). They are largely of anecdotal importance to the lineage, although they speak to a wider (or longer-lasting) tradition than perhaps initially considered.

Besides the obviously Fiorean techniques, we employ this series of manuscripts as "frog DNA" for both applied and neo *armizare*. Its richness in wrestling techniques and sword and buckler make it invaluable to the advanced practitioner looking to widen the spectrum of technique.

CORE DISCIPLINES

While the school practices the various disciplines of *l'arte dell'armizare*, the disciplines focused on by the Fundamentals curriculum (up to Scholar rank) are as follows.

GRAPPLING/ABRAZARE



Fiore dei Liberi's system of *abrazare* ("art of the embrace") forms the basis, or core, of his system in at least two of the four known manuscripts, and arguably the two remaining treatises as well.

We favour the pedagogical approach detailed in these manuscripts in our exploration of his Art by beginning with the unarmed principles and techniques.

Dei Liberi's system is closely intertwined with his dagger section and draws from classical greco-roman wrestling. It is comprised of takedowns, throws, locks and striking defences, with strikes implicit in his description of the attributes of *abrazare*, forming a complete system of defence.

As *abrazare*, encapsulates Fiore's unarmed combat system, it is less a system and more a set of precepts laying the foundational material for the technical material to follow. Students will learn the fundamental movements, footwork and techniques of *abrazare*, much like a student of Fiore dei Liberi might have, building upon these fundamental concepts to further their understanding and hone their

skills.

DAGGER



The dagger material is founded upon the abrazare material and continues to develop the fundamentals of the system. The student will be introduced to the rondel dagger, its basic grips and attacks as well as both armed and unarmed plays of the dagger, divided by Fiore into various “remedies”, allowing the student to become familiar with defences from all four basic attack angles. It will also introduce the student to disarms and basic locks – fundamental to the system as a whole.

The daggers depicted in the Fior Bataglia are of the “rondel” variety. These daggers did not necessarily have sharp edges, but relied on the point to inflict damage. The “rondels” are so named in reference to the guards: large round washers at each end of the grip, preventing the hand from sliding down the blade on impact as well as “locking” the dagger into a gauntleted hand. Against an armoured man, the dagger was used to thrust into the gaps at close-quarters, and against an unarmoured opponent, the weapon was truly deadly. Against both types of opponents, cuts were generally not employed, at least in Fiore’s system. We can only speculate as to the reasons for this, but against armour it is fairly self-evident. We can speculate that the clothing and fabric of the period may have hampered effective cutting for those daggers sporting an edge. Secondly, a thrust may have been perceived as more definitive, while a slice or cut may not have been immediately debilitating, nor even necessarily deadly. Since by his own admission, techniques in the manuscript are “for war” and not “for love” (play or sport), it is a reasonable assumption that the thrust is used because of its more immediate killing effect.

The manuscript’s dagger section is also its most extensive. Dei Liberi uses it pedagogically, illustrating core principles and techniques as they apply to other sections of his work. The section comprises no less than seventy six techniques against the dagger, both unarmed and with a dagger – not counting the dagger versus sword and bastoncello techniques.

Fiore begins the dagger section by describing specific attacks with the dagger, followed by a description of the various guards or poste. The various techniques follow, and comprise a series of covers, disarms, locking techniques as well as a variety of throws and takedowns.

Following this section is a brief bridging section featuring dagger versus sword before moving to the spada a una mano (sword in one hand) section.

SWORD IN TWO HANDS



The spada a due mani (sword in two hands) or longsword portion of the curriculum is geared towards attaining basic proficiency with the weapon: grip, cuts, basic parries and a demonstration of control and respect for one’s partner, forming the basis upon which the rest of the curriculum is built. Students will also be introduced to slow-speed and controlled free play.

The medieval longsword, wielded in two hands, is a formidable weapon. It is fast and accurate, given the control one has with two hands, not to mention the increased power a second hand on the weapon

adds. This strength is also its weakness, since wielding it with both hands prevents the use of a shield or buckler. Furthermore, the hands are linked on the grip making some actions or positions weaker or untenable given the necessity of crossing the hands. The longswords depicted in Fiore's manuscript are typical of the weapons used in that period. They average at a length equal to the height of the sternum, with a longer grip than an arming (single hand) sword. Used for both cutting and thrusting, often tapering to an acute point, they were used against both armoured and unarmoured foes with great effect.

Fiore's longsword follows a paradigm similar to the dagger and sword in one hand sections, beginning with a "perfect" measure, presenting various tactical options depending on the opponent's blade pressure or position, and then collapses distance into close-quarters fighting with the longsword – illustrating again various locks and takedowns. These wider and shorter measure techniques are referred to as *giocco largo* (wide play) and *giocco stretto* (narrow play), respectively.

RESOURCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

A number of resources are available for the student of LMA. Foremost is the school's website at <http://www.armizare.com>

Secondly, the principal instructor maintains a training blog detailing the exercises, drills and principles for each class. Visit the archives to see past posts and training. http://www.armizare.com/?page_id=866

The International Armizare Society (IAS) - <http://www.armizare.org> is an organisation dedicated to the preservation and promotion of canonical Armizare.

Furthermore, there are a number of other schools and resources available on the web. There is a non-exhaustive list of links in the relevant section of the website.

A Google Group has been set up as a mailing list to aid communication between instructors and students and indeed, amongst students as well as for the discussion of relevant topics. Class cancellations and important notices will be broadcast through this channel – check your email every week! If you are not on the mailing list, please request to be added by contacting Jason@maitresarmes.com

The principal instructor can be contacted through jason@maitresarmes.com

PEDAGOGICAL METHOD

The pedagogical method and interpretations of the historical material and canon have been developed for Les Maitres d'Armes by the principal instructor. As such, all historical material will be supplemented with practise in fencing and grappling fundamentals taken from any number of sources: printed material on the Art of Armizare, seminars attended by the instructors, or drills of the instructors' own devising.

These methods and interpretations are the fruit of 15 years of practise and research, the last ten of

which have been focused study in l'arte dell'armizare by Jason Smith, the school's principal instructor and curriculum director. The curriculum and evaluations have been devised using this experience as a basis for the continued study and refinement for the art he teaches.

RULES AND ETIQUETTE

Two general safety rules apply in all circumstances:

1. Respect your training partners, the weapons, their ability to do serious harm, and the Art.
2. Be aware of your surroundings, your level of control and your partner's ability. Be a safe, compliant training partner. This is a learned skill.

SAFETY

Horseplay is strictly forbidden.

Please wear proper training attire. Shorts are frowned upon.

Consumption of any recreational drugs or alcohol before training or demonstrations will result in summary expulsion without refund. Some prescription medications carry warnings about potential effects on concentration or coordination; please discuss these privately with your instructor as necessary.

When you hear the commands 'Halt!', 'Stop!', 'Hold!', immediately stop what you are doing, lower your weapon, and return to a position of attention.

Jewelry such as necklaces, bracelets (including string bracelets), rings and earrings must be removed during training. The only exception is any simple, plain ring with no protuberances (such as a simple wedding band).

Any student with an open wound may be asked to excuse themselves.

All strikes and throws, whether with weapons or not, must be carefully controlled and calibrated to not injure.

Joint locks should never be taken to completion.

Always treat every weapon as if the point and edges were sharp. All weapons must be inspected and maintained regularly.

Always carry weapons point-down with the point behind you, as if in a scabbard, or in the upright carry, with the point directly upwards.

Never randomly swing the blade or 'slice' the air with any weapon, or tuck it under your arm, or lay it across your shoulder. It's not a baseball bat, a golf club, a tennis racket, a swagger-stick, or a toy.

All students must act in accordance with all civil laws regulating the use of arms and the methods studied within the school. Improper use of the L'Arte dell'Armizare within or without the school is prohibited.

CLASS ETIQUETTE

Classes open and close with a formal salute. The instructor stands at the head of the room. Students

form a semi-circle in order of rank, with senior students to the instructor's left. If there is a designated class assistant, the assistant takes the first place in line. This will normally be one of the senior-most students.

Please address your instructor respectfully, and not informally, during class time. Focus should be kept on everyone's position and responsibilities. When class is over, informal address and manner is fine.

Please do not talk when instruction is being given. Everyone must be able to hear the instructor clearly. Transitions between exercises or after receiving instruction must be done quickly. Loafing will earn you push-ups.

Maintain proper decorum. Sitting during class is actively discouraged.

Acknowledge all directions and instructions with a clear "yes." Furthermore, acknowledge all salutes with one in kind. When in doubt, saluting is better than not saluting.

Each partner drill starts with a simple salute. Afterward, salute again, shake hands, and say "thank you".

Do not give instruction unless the class instructor has given you permission to do so.

Don't use foul or inappropriate language in the sala d'armi.

Any students' or visitor's property should be treated with the same respect as that person himself or herself and should not be handled or used without their permission.

Always treat everyone with courtesy and respect, whether student, instructor, guest or spectator. Rude or discourteous behavior is the weak person's imitation of strength.

Students must attend in appropriate attire for training, nominally a uniform.

FREEPLAY ETIQUETTE

Freeplay is a privilege, not a right, which commences or halts at the instructor's will. This privilege must be continually earned through clear demonstration of controlled fencing practices and courteous behaviour.

All free-play will be done in accordance with the rules set forth prior to the session and agreed upon by all parties involved, with the safety of the participants foremost in mind at all times.

Always salute before engaging in freeplay, and salute and shake hands afterwards.

Always acknowledge any possible hit against yourself by saying "touch" or naming the place hit. Do not equivocate by saying "I think..." or "Maybe..." or "Possibly..." or anything similar.

Never claim a hit against your opponent. When your opponent acknowledges a hit, reply with thank you.

When your opponent acknowledges a touch that you doubt, decline it by saying "no thank you."

When your opponent declines a touch, also reply with thank you.

Aggressive freeplay is acceptable; violent freeplay is not. No action of yours should cause your opponent pain or harm. There is a difference between aggressive freeplay and violent freeplay.

SAFETY AND DRILLING

While training, it is of the utmost importance that the student considers his training partner as such – a partner and not an adversary. The partner's role is to aid the practitioner in understanding and applying principles and techniques. When introducing a new technique for practice, training partners must begin at a slow pace in order to ensure respect of the mechanics of the technique.

Slowly increase speed and resistance as proficiency increases to a point where techniques are done near full speed. If (when) you reach a speed where you can no longer execute the technique with proper form, or perform the drill as instructed, you must slow down. Note here that control is of the utmost importance when drilling and in free play. There are no such things as accidents; there is only lack of attention or lack of control that may ultimately lead to serious injury. Winning or losing a drill during practice is anathema to good training, and you must avoid the “but what if I do this to counter...?” scenario. This scenario does nothing to further understanding of the technique at hand, and is actually detrimental to the training regimen as a whole. If the training partner is resisting, or in some way rendering the exercise more difficult than prescribed, the student is encouraged to remind him that it is not a competition and that your training, his training, and possibly the safety of both partners are compromised. Promptly alert the instructors present if any situations arise with which you are uncomfortable.

SALUTING

Each class begins with a group salute to encourage a particular mindset. The salute is simple, regardless of the weapon you are wielding.

1. Stand erect and at attention.
2. Raise your weapon to eye level, lowering your eyes as a show of trust and respect. If you are empty-handed, clasp your hands together and raise them as with a weapon.
3. Extend your arms forward, remaining at eye level and proffer your weapon to your partner.
4. Lower the weapon and assume a posture appropriate to the situation.

UNIFORMS

Students are expected to acquire a uniform after the first semester of classes. This first semester acts as a trial period, allowing prospective students to evaluate if Les Maîtres d'Armes is for them. If the answer is “yes,” students should address Rachel Beauchamp, LMA Scholar to inquire about obtaining a uniform. Uniforms are available for an affordable \$85.

A belt also forms part of the uniform. This may be leather or fabric, but should not have any sharp edges, corners or points.

RANK PINS AND GARTERS

Rank pins are to be worn on the right lapel of the uniform for the first two ranks. The Provost and Master pins should be affixed to the left lapel. Garters are worn on the left leg. Both are considered a part of the uniform.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment requirements for the practise of armizare with the school are varied, depending on the level of the student and the activity. Please consult the text below for details. If students lack the required equipment, they will be asked to observe class until such time as they are capable of participating. The cost is not negligible, but is comparable to other sporting activities. A fully equipped student meeting the basic equipment and safety requirements faces a cost of approximately \$750. The requisite equipment can be acquired incrementally, but training may suffer if there is a lack of proper safety equipment. These safety measures will be strictly enforced.

Novice Equipment

The novice, upon joining our ranks should have, at minimum, the following:

- T-shirt, with long-sleeves being optimal to prevent burns and nicks.
- Sport pants (jogging or otherwise, black or dark blue). NO shorts. We recommend “Under Armour” Heat Gear leggings.
- Flat-soled shoes suitable for practising footwork (martial arts shoes, canvas “converse” style shoes, etc...)
- Practise equipment (practise swords, dagger wasters) is provided, but the student is encouraged to buy his own equipment as soon as is feasible. After the first semester (12 week training session), Novices are expected to have their own uniform.

CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF YOUR EQUIPMENT

The state of your equipment reflects on yourself and the school, as well as being important in the prevention of injuries.

1. Keep your uniform neat and clean.
2. Swords should be inspected and kept free of rust, nicks and burrs and oiled after each use. The school keeps files and oil on hand to help keep your equipment maintained.
3. Head protection should be inspected to ensure it is not cracked, dented or otherwise damaged. The same applies to hand or other body protection. Repair or replace a broken mask or other protective equipment immediately.

These simple steps help to ensure safe training for everybody involved – be sure to abide by them at all times.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Any student performing an action deemed inappropriate or in contravention of the rules, in fact or in spirit, may face disciplinary action.

These actions may take the form of simple oral imprecations or warnings to written warnings, placed in

the student's file. A grave fault, as deemed by the principal instructor, or the accumulation of no more than three (3) written warnings may result in suspension or summary expulsion without refund.

RANKING SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Ranking in the school follows the following schema: Novice (novizio), Apprentice (apprendista), Player (giocatore), Companion (compagno), Scholar (scolaro), Free Scholar (laureato), Provost (rettore) and Master (magistro). These ranks have further been invested with the International Armizare Association, and conform to a common set of criteria and level of performance – both a guarantor of quality and an inter-school recognition of rank. Each is represented by regalia in the form of a garter, worn on the left leg, and a pin, worn on the appropriate lapel of the uniform. Worn by historic Orders of Chivalry, the garter is derived from the ties that bound the armour to its wearer. This militaristic token serves as a reminder of the ties that bind practitioners together, and is provided as a solemn expression of acceptance. A brief description as well as the regalia for each rank follows, with specific details and requirements provided in the particular sections pertaining to those ranks :

STUDENT RANKS

Novice (novizio): none (uniform required)

Apprentice (apprendista): A beginning student who has been accepted into the school. He is awarded a white garter.

Player (giocatore): An intermediate student. He is awarded a beige garter upon promotion to this rank.

Companion (compagno): An intermediate student. He is awarded a brown garter, as well as an elephant pin, representative of the foundations of the Arte (fortitudo), to be worn on his uniform lapel.

Scholar (scolaro): A senior student of l'Arte. He sports a blue garter (the school's colours) in recognition of this achievement, as well as a tigre pin (representing the virtue of speed, presteza) This is the first rank recognised by the International Armizare Society (IAS). There are several levels of Scholar to attain before reaching the level of Free Scholar, divided by weapon. The Scholar section will contain more information once you've attained that rank.

INSTRUCTOR-LEVEL RANKS

Free Scholar (laureato): This rank represents the first of the instructor-level ranks, and is awarded to students having visited all the unarmoured canon of the manuscripts. It is a junior level instructor rank, accompanied by a gold garter and a Lynx pin, representing prudence to be worn on the lapel.

Provost (rettore): A senior level instructor, the Provost is the first of the upper ranks in the guild system, and the first formal teaching rank. Provost generally act under the guidance of a Master, and can teach as heads of chapters or specific programs. It is the first rank that is conveyed directly by the IAS, except in those cases where, for lack of a sponsoring academy, the association has directly awarded the rank of Free Scholar. A Provost must be capable of teaching all of the core elements of the FS curriculum and have experience in the breadth of the full use of the art on foot, and conduct original research or technical development of the art. Only a provost may promote Scholars. A dark red garter and Lion

(audatia) pin represent this rank.

Master (magistro): The rank of Magister is a senior teaching rank, and represents the head of a school working independently of the tutelage of another. His role as head of a school is to continue to foster good pedagogy, create and refine curricula, research source texts and publish relevant articles to the community, transmitting l'arte dell'armizare as a living art in the interest of providing a lineage. He is awarded with a bastoncello (baton), and his symbol is the master of the sette spada.

PROVISIONAL RANKS

Instructor : The “Instructor” rank may be attributed to any other member of the school having developed a training program in a weapons style outside of the school’s core curriculum, at the governing body’s discretion (an archery program, for instance). Instructors wear an unadorned Burgundy garter to signify their position in the school.

OBTAINING RANK

Obtaining rank within the school is a multi-part process. For lower and intermediate ranks, the candidate must have passed the requisite written and practical examinations, after which he may be presented with his garter. In addition to these examinations, advanced students anticipating the ranks of Scolaro and above must challenge for rank through a prize play. It is assumed at this point that the candidate has been vetted by his peers and/or sponsor and has shown good moral character as well as dedication to the study of the Art.

Challenges for rank (prize plays) constitute Feats of Arms and must be done in accordance with generally accepted practise from the 15th century. For the purposes of ranking, a Feat of Arms constitutes a combat activity in which the risks are controlled and limited. The goal is to practise armed combat whilst demonstrating prowess to the assembled participants and gallery. There are different types of Feats of Arms with varying risk levels, detailed in the appendices.

EXAMINATION

Before acceding to any of the formal ranks, several forms of examination may be applied, ranging from simple demonstration of technique and oral questioning to a more rigorous written exam and prize play. As such, you may be asked to demonstrate certain techniques taken from the list of requirements, as well as demonstrate an ability to participate in some form of freeplay while exhibiting control, safety, and a regard for your training partner. Higher ranks have instructional requirements (in the interests of transmitting a tradition), and you may be asked to provide a lesson or demonstrate techniques for individuals or a class. Specific requirements are outlined for each rank, and are encapsulated in the Master Rank Table, found in the appendices.

Both Quality of Execution (QoE) and Quality of Interpretation (QoI) Standards exist to ensure the candidate for rank meets the required standards, as per his/her desired rank. QoE standards exist for all rank levels, and are based on a competency rating summarised below. For a full description of the QoE

specifications, please refer to the appendices.

QoI standards exist for the ranks of Free Scholar and above, wherein teaching and transmission components are evaluated. These standards are stringent, but not as strictly defined as the QoE standards.

PRIZE PLAY

Having otherwise met the requirements for the rank you wish to obtain, and have had an instructor sign off on them, including having passed the theoretical and practical demonstration requirements, you may ask to play a prize.

To do so, you must publicly issue a challenge (to the group) and publish your chapters of arms. These chapters outline the challenge and the rules of the challenge. The principal instructors will then publicly announce a date for the prize play. Model chapters will be provided in the appendix.

In the interim, your sponsor will aid you in preparing for the prize play. For example, an Apprentice would have a Companion or higher ranked member as a sponsor to help him train, evaluating his conduct and readiness for the challenge.

You must prove your merits and show a level of knowledge equivalent to your challenged-for rank, after which you must submit to single or multiple combat with a variety of arms and fighting styles determined by the rank and course of study. Upon a successful play for a prize (as determined by the school's governing body) you will be presented with a pin and garter symbolising your new found rank in the school, to be worn in accordance with our etiquette rules (right collar, left leg).

The process summarised in point form, is as follows:

- Verify equipment and reading requirements are met.
- Successful theoretical examination.
- Successful practical examination.
- Successful prize play.

Following a successful prize play, you will be awarded your pin and garter, with an accompanying certificate. The ceremony and prize play are included in the appendices.

TRAINING, CURRICULUM AND CLASS STRUCTURE

TRAINING

Formal instruction takes place in the sala d'armi. With that in mind, training continues outside the sala. Students are expected to train at home and continue to keep up their general fitness levels through an exercise regimen and solo drills.

Students are also encouraged to take notes during class for later review. A training blog is also available with a range of drills and exercises drawn from the classes and can be found here:

<http://www.armizare.com/?cat=73>

HOW TO BE A GOOD TRAINING PARTNER

It is important to remember that being a good training partner is a learned skill. To gain the maximum benefit from the drill or exercise, always keep in mind that each partner has a role to play, and going outside the scope of the drill defeats the purpose of the exercise. Practise at the speed required, and only speed up once you have achieved proficiency at the level you are working. If a technique falls apart, slow down, and work back to gaining speed.

Furthermore, unless specifically noted, you should not be trying to “win” the exercise, but rather provide proper kinesthetic feedback and responses to your partner. It is both unpleasant and counterproductive to partner with an uncooperative partner. Mind your manners, and remember: you are not the instructor. It is not your place to provide either correction or instruction, unless the exercise specifically demands it.

Do:

- Stick to the drill. Do not go outside the scope of the exercise, as this defeats the purpose of the drill and its place in the class progression.
- Practice at appropriate speeds - almost always these are slow, smooth speeds.
- Excessive speed hinders your ability to feel and think about the action, and hides mistakes from you - but not from your instructor or your partner. As you gain command of the form, speed will naturally increase. Don't rush it.
- If a technique breaks down in practice, slow down. This will give you time, as noted above, to analyze what's going on.
- Ask questions. There's almost always more than one solution to a given problem, and numerous variable details of execution.

Don't:

- Do not invent your own actions, responses, or interpretations. If you have questions about other possibilities, ask. Skill progressions are designed to teach fundamental principles of technique, tactics, or strategy appropriate to the student's level of skill and experience. Covering all possibilities is a lifetime undertaking.

- Do not attempt to “win” the exercise. Drills are designed to provide proper kinesthetic feedback to both partners. It is unpleasant and counterproductive to train with an uncooperative partner.

FREEPLAY AND SPARRING

The School employs a variety of models for freeplay (sparring). The bridge between strict drills and complete freeplay is in the form of exercises with certain parameters in which actions are limited to specific techniques. Such exercises can more or less limit the scope of possibilities, and are designed to focus the student’s attention on specific aspects of the art as applied in the fight. Since any limitation introduced necessarily distorts the reality of the art’s application, conditions in these drills are usually changed frequently from more limitations to fewer.

It is important to understand that even freeplay has limitations placed on it. The most obvious limitation is that we use blunt weapons and protective equipment, we play so as to minimize the possibility of injury, and our intent is not lethal - quite the opposite! Safety is our number one goal, as always. The effect of all this is to remove the very natural fear one would have with sharp weapons and lethal intent, to remove the caution that fear would inspire, and to encourage behavior that is not consistent with a real fight. Because of this, students must:

Always strive to cultivate a “hit without being hit” mindset. It’s not enough to strike a fraction of a second before your opponent; you must prevent your opponent striking within both the same and the following tempo in which you have struck.

Fight with the utmost courtesy and respect towards your opponents, and always give them the benefit of the doubt when assessing actions and motivations.

Understand that freeplay is not the ultimate goal of practice, but merely another practice tool for gaining a deeper understanding of L’Arte dell’Armizare.

To this end, students are given varying opportunities to exercise their skills – from antagonistic drills of varying complexity to formal “fight nights” and tournaments. Please use these opportunities judiciously, as a means to improving your understanding of the art, and remember to enjoy yourself and be safe.

MEASURING SUCCESS IN FREEPLAY

On the face of it, the person who gives more and receives fewer hits would seem to be the more successful fighter. There’s some truth to this, but it’s a limited truth: it applies best to a competitive mindset in a context where the chance of even minor injury is low, such as a sports competition. And to be fair, back in the heyday of Armizare, such competitions were frequently held (Fiore makes reference to them in his introduction to the art). But they were held in a context where the people knew that they would also use the art in deadly earnest, and Fiore makes this point as well:

“I have always told my students who had to fight in the lists that doing so is far less dangerous than combat with sharp swords in a gambeson. With sharps and a gambeson, a single failed parry can be fatal, while in the lists a combatant wearing good armor can receive multiple hits and still go on to win

the fight. Also, oftentimes none of the combatants dies because one will hold the other for ransom. This is why I always say that I'd sooner fight three contests in the lists than a single one with sharp swords, as I have described."

Success in freeplay is best measured by subjective assessment: how well do you apply the principles of the art taught in your lessons? Each technique taught contains a principle of martial arts that can be applied in freeplay. Application of principles in freeplay is a test of the student's understanding, and a difficult test at that. With each session of freeplay, students should take careful note of the following:

Strategic Context: their assessment of the capabilities of the opponent, correlated to an understanding of their own capabilities;

Strategic Choice: their selection of strategy, such as offensive, defensive, counter-offensive, or mixed;

Tactical Context: their assessment of the opponent's strategic choices;

Tactical Choices: their selection of specific techniques to carry out the strategic choice.

End Results: the results of this process. Don't be simplistic: "got hit" or "gave hit" aren't as important as understanding how one got or gave a hit. What, specifically, made a set of choices succeed or fail? Was it calculated skill or did it involve a high degree of luck? The ability to answer to these questions honestly and accurately will directly affect your progress.

COMPETITION VS FREEPLAY

At LMA, our training is focused practicing on the whole art of Armizare as we (to the best of our ability) believe it was applied 600 years ago. To that end we espouse a variety of training methodologies, including competition. But it's important to have a clear understanding of how competition fits into a martial arts training paradigm that is focused on the art, rather than on the competitive sport application of the art.

Freeplay is a training tool. Competitive fencing or martial arts can be either a training tool or an end goal. As a training tool, it provides a high pressure environment with multiple things to keep track of (rules, need to account for the skill or lack thereof of judges and referees, tracking scores and statistics to maximize chances for promotion to a good slot in the elimination bouts, conserving energy, and more). In general, competitive fighting is (or can be) about hitting before getting hit, not hitting without getting hit. The dedicated sports competitor doesn't have to be concerned with simulating a "real" fight: this is the real fight. If competitive success is the goal, there is no simulation. The best competitive fencers and martial artists tend to be those who focus exclusively on the competitive environment, leaving behind anything from the art that does not support that goal.

Our view is that competitive fencing and martial arts best engaged in when the student has completed not merely the fundamentals but has achieved strong competence in intermediate level skills, such as strategic and tactical assessment and planning, and including extensive freeplay with school instructors, fellow students, and people from the wider HEMA community.

CLASS STRUCTURE

Each class begins with a warm-up period and is then followed by some theoretical material and/or practical drills designed to practise specific aspect of the art. The usual rotation for classes is three grappling classes, three dagger classes and three longsword classes for the Fundamentals period. Each class builds in succession upon the previous class to help ingrain techniques and principles through repetition.

CURRICULUM

This guide forms a detailed overview of the overall curriculum, divided by rank, with sections added as you progress, to be inserted into your training binder. Each section will contain pertinent information for each rank, criteria for testing, check lists and reminders to help you progress. Further, a training guide, complete with photographs is in production as an adjunct to training. This curriculum is a living document, however, and is continually changing in an effort to improve and refine the exercises and content in order to best serve you, the students of LMA. As such, this document is updated semi-regularly with the input of students and as conditions dictate. The inside cover page contains the relevant information as to release date and version.

OBJECTIVES

The Fundamentals curriculum prepares the novice and continues to provide the more advanced student with a grounding in the mechanical and tactical framework of historical combat as well as in its historical context. It is designed to give the student of *armizare* a basis in the fundamental precepts and mechanics of the Art, forming the fundamental building blocks for continued training. Students are encouraged to attend Fundamentals classes throughout their training with the school, given the importance these fundamental principles and mechanics have in the practise of the system.

Successful completion of the curriculum may take the student upwards of two years. Successful completion means that the student is ready to take the Scholar test and play for the prize of the Scholar rank.

The general objectives of the program are to:

Provide the student with historical context and act as an introduction to the structure of the manuscript;

Learn basic fight and fencing theory: Line, openings, and pressure;

Learn basic body mechanics: footwork and the importance of structure;

Perform the fundamental plays of *abrazare* illustrating the tactical layout of the system;

Perform basic dagger attacks and unarmed defences, repeating the tactical layout of the system;

Demonstrate basic longsword mechanics, structure, attacks and defences again structured to illustrate

the basic tactical structure of the manuscript;

The guide will begin by grouping the Novice and Apprentice information, to orient the Novice student, and give him the tools and criteria he needs to work on to progress to the next rank – that of Apprentice.

The following table gives a very general overview of the major ranks and their requirements.

RANK/ REQUIREMENT	SCHOLAR	FREE SCHOLAR	PROVOST	MAESTRO
Safety skills	Falling and takedowns	Falling and takedowns with weapons, teaching safety skills	Teaching advanced falling techniques	N/A
Teaching skills	Basic teaching skills (drill level)	Advanced teaching skills (Scholar curriculum)	Free scholar curriculum, program development	School head
Academics	Fencing theory	Theory and historical context	Research	Development and research
Abrazare	Base plays	All canon, applied	Applied abrazare	Any of these to expertise (specialisation)
Daga	1 st – 9 th remedy covers	All canon + dagger vs. sword	To mastery	
Longsword	Giocco largo	Giocco stretto	To mastery	
Sword in one hand	N/A	Largo applied + canon + equestrian	To proficiency	
Spear	Fundamental	Common & Fiore methods	To proficiency	
Pollaxe	N/A	N/A	To proficiency	

RANKING TABLES AND CRITERIA

COMPETENCE

To gain any rank outlined in the pertinent sections, a student must have gained a certain level of skill in the required elements for his rank. The scale and criteria for each of the competence levels follows, along with the legend to help you decipher the tables found below.

QUALITY OF EXECUTION

Quality of Execution (QoE) will be graduated along a skill progression slide adapted from a model proposed by Henri Boudreault, PH.D. The model is as follows:

- **Novice (N):** rigid adherence to taught rules or plans, no exercise of "discretionary judgment"
 - Rote execution or repetition of a demonstrated technique or skill as demonstrated, often without using proper mechanics and without necessarily demonstrating an understanding of the wider context or variations in technique.

- **Intermediate (I):** has limited "situational perception", all aspects of technique treated separately with equal importance.
 - Applies, with help or prompting, the knowledge and skills necessary to the performance of a technique.
 - Proper mechanics are more prevalent, but secondary to the performance of the technique. I.e. the student will quickly abandon proper mechanics if the situation becomes difficult.
 - Application of technique requires concentration and conscious thought.

- **Competent (C):** independent evaluation of a situation, autonomy, and transfer of technique across situations.
 - Executes techniques in isolation (set plays, simple phrases) against non-compliant partners.
 - Executes technique without prompting, in tempo and using proper body mechanics.
 - Capable of planning an approach (strategically)
 - Can apply tactical decision making consciously

- **Proficient (P):** ability to apply and adapt technique and mechanics to a variety of situations.
 - Executes multiple techniques ("strings techniques) together to form complex phrases
 - Employs proper body mechanics, at speed

- Can apply tactical decision making with little conscious thought
- **Mastery (M):** Has a holistic view and can adapt technique to varying situations *and* weapons (i.e. has practised the corpus of techniques and can use them across weapons and versus disparate weapons)
 - Employs proper body mechanics with fluidity and grace (*sprezzatura*¹)
 - Applies tactical decision making intuitively
- **Expertise (E):** Innovates, building upon his mastery, is not limited by the parameters of the system
 - Has significant skill or knowledge beyond mastery in a particular sphere of research (polearms, mounted combat, etc.)

For instance, to gain Scholar rank, the student should be rated as “competent” in the required skills. Individual schools are encouraged to use the qualitative assignments with their internal ranks and evaluations.

Level of competency will thus be graduated using the legend: N (Novice), I (Intermediate), C (competent), M (Mastery), and E (Expertise).

Further, the evaluation of the acquisition of certain skills should be dichotomous, and as such, cannot (or should not) be graduated. These skills, along with the acquisition of particular knowledge, will thus be indicated with a check mark .

QUALITY OF INTERPRETATION

Quality of interpretation (QoI) is not evaluated for student up to the level of scholar.

CHEAT SHEET

Novice: Performs with direction

Intermediate: Can perform with basic ability with prompting and help

Competent: Performs well, spontaneously and without prompting

EVALUATION

A checkmark indicates that a student should have acquired a level of knowledge and may be tested or otherwise evaluated on said knowledge.

A competence level, denoted by an accompanying colour code, indicates the student should have attained the required level to obtain the accompanying rank, and should be evaluated. Subsequent squares with the same colour code mean no evaluation is necessary. For instance:



¹ Perhaps best translated as “effortless grace.”

The student will not be evaluated at Novice (N) level, but should be evaluated (formally or informally) when he reaches (I) and again when he reaches (C). While he is evaluated twice for the same technique or skill, the QoE (and thus the expected level of execution) changes according to the sliding scale.

LEGEND Acquired  N Novice (not evaluated)  I Intermediate  C Competent  P Proficient (surpasses expectations)

APPENDIX A RANK INVESTITURE CEREMONY

Investiture of a Companion into Les Maîtres d'Armes

Location:

Prize Playing hall

Participants:

Presiding instructor
Scolari and other ranked members
Candidate(s)

Regalia:

LMA Banner
Candidates' banner(s)
Sword (Longsword for longsword prizes, rapier for rapier prizes)
Certificate
Garter
School Book

Set-Up

All participants are required to be in uniforms, bearing their insignia of rank. The Presiding instructor bears the marshal's white baton, and next ranked member present bears the sword. The School book is displayed open on a lectern to the left of the Presiding instructor.

Opening:

The candidate(s) is/are brought before the Presiding Instructor. The following is read aloud:

____(name)____,

Mindful of your dedication to the study of the Noble Art of Armizare and in recognition of the prowess you have honorably displayed here today, you have earned the privilege and been accepted by your peers as a ____ (rank) ____ of Les Maîtres d'Armes.

The Acceptance:

Do you understand the mission and values of the school, and the responsibilities of your rank?

Knowing this, is it your intention to accept the rank of ____ (rank) ____ within Les Maîtres d'Armes?

If the answers to the above are all in the affirmative, the ceremony continues.

The Lesson:

Having earned this privilege, it is important that you understand that this is but the beginning of your journey. Soon to be presented to you is the emblem of a great beast, taken from the Segno of Maestro Fiore dei Liberi. It is a reminder of what you have accomplished and a token of what lay ahead.

(What follows depends on the rank being played for)

For Compagni :

It is said of the elephant that it represents fortitudo, or strength:

I carry a castle for a burden. I do not kneel down, nor do I lose my path.

The elephant bearing the tower represents the foundation and an unwavering strength of character. May he guide you on your path and may you never falter.

The Candidate is invested with the elefante pin, to be worn on their right collar.

For Scolari :

The tigre represents speed, this virtue you have cultivated in the application of technique:

The Pledge:

Then it is our pleasure to acknowledge you a Companion of LMA. Please place your hand upon the cross of this sword, and recite the Companion's Pledge.

Candidate responds after prompting from Presiding Instructor:

I __ (name) __ hereby pledge before this assembly, and upon the hilt of this sword, to be a true Companion of Les Maîtres d'Armes. To be called such is a solemn trust: I shall honor that trust in these ways:

- to respect this art, and never lose sight of its lethal nature;
- to honor and respect my instructors;
- to honor and respect all members of the School, regardless of rank;
- to respect and adhere to the rules, regulations and methodologies of the School;
- to continuously pursue the development of the Art of Arms, both in myself and my fellow Companions, with pride, but not vanity;
- to be a good citizen, and to act in such a fashion as to bring myself, the art, and the school, renown, not shame;
- to never teach this art to others, or to claim to represent Les Maîtres d'Armes, without the permission of its Provosts.

So do I pledge.

The candidate is invested with his garter, secured below the left knee, during which the following is spoken:

The tradition of the Garter comes to us from the highest of Knightly Orders and from the writings of Magistro Fiore dei Liberi da Premariacco. Its circle represents the unity of purpose of the Companions, and serves as the tie that binds us all together. Bear it with pride, but not with vanity, allowing it to remind both you and others of your continued commitment to our noble Art. Let the words inscribed upon it also remind you of a trust between all Companions. This trust is what keeps the Art alive, lest it be forgotten once again.

The Presiding Instructor ties the garter to the candidate's leg, symbolic of his acceptance as a peer. He shakes the Candidate's hand, and gestures to the Companion Book

Now enter your name amongst our rolls as a _____(rank)_____ of Les Maitres d'Armes.

The other Companions now greet the new member of their company, and the ceremony is ended.

-finis-

APPENDIX B – GLOSSARY

Abrazare: Wrestling, “the art of the embrace.”

Acressere: A forward step with the leading foot. The trailing foot “catches up.”

Bicorno: A guard position.

Breve: short. Specifically a guard position.

Chiave: a key, specifically a type of lock (*chiave forte*)

Colpe: A cleaving blow.

Daga: Dagger.

Dente di Cinghiale: Boar’s tooth. A guard position.

Destra: on the right

Discesse: a backward *acressere*

Donna: lady. Specifically a guard position.

Falso: false, more specifically the false edge of the sword.

Fendente: a descending blow

Fenestra: window. More specifically, it is a guard position.

Filo: Edge. *Dritto filo* (true edge), *falso filo* (false edge).

Fora di strada: off the line

Forte: Strong, in context, the strong of the blade (lower half)

Forteza: strength. In context: “*pui forteza*” (more strength), a guiding principle in the manuscripts.

Frontale: frontal. Specifically a guard position.

Giocco largo: wide play. Specifically actions with weapons that occur at wide measure.

Giocco stretto: close play. Specifically actions with or without weapons that occur in close measure.

Giocco: play

Lanza: lance/spear.

Ligadura: a lock.

Longa: long. Specifically a guard position.

Mandritto: forehand

Meza/mezana: middle or half, depending on context.

Mezano: one of the 6 blows, these are horizontal. Literally, “middle blow”.

Passare: to pass; to step passing one foot past the other.

Porta di ferro: iron door. Specifically a guard position, either middle (*mezana*) or whole (*tutta*).

Posta: Guard position. Plural *poste*.

Punta: point (of a weapon), or a thrust.

Rebattere: to beat aside, specifically an incoming weapon.

Romperre: to break, as in *romperre di punta*, to break the thrust (a defensive action).

Roverso: backhand

Scambiar: to exchange. Specifically, *scambiar di punta*, the exchange of thrust.

Sinistra: on the left.

Sopramano: Overhand

Sottano: a rising blow.

Sottomano: underhand.

Spada: Sword

Strada: way, line. Specifically the line between two fencers. Usually in context "*fora di strada*", off the line.

Tornare: to pass backwards.

Tutta: whole or full.

Void: Negate an attack by stepping out of its reach.

Volta: turn, specifically *volta stabile*, stable turn; *meza volta*, half turn; *tutta volta*, whole turn.