

**Francisco Lorenz de Rada, *Nobleza de la espada***  
(Madrid: Imprenta Real; Joseph Rodriguez Escobar, 1705)

[Translated by Alan Bloniarz]

[p. 263]

How to oppose those who position themselves in the Indian posture<sup>1</sup> with their left collateral plane forward at the *medio de proporcion*:

In this posture, in which the Indians commonly position themselves, the left foot is somewhat in front of the right and the guard is placed between the seventh and eighth lines so that it corresponds between the fifth and sixth horizontal planes. The pommel points to the diametric of the chest and the primary vertical plane, and the sword is in its second line, which is the same as carrying the point in the obtuse angle. The left collateral plane is placed forward. This positioning of the body, arm, and sword takes away the disposition of the profile and much of the jurisdiction of the swords. If any contact or movement is made to include the sword, they will cut across it to throw a wound with tremendous force. Therefore, the Diestro must proceed with great caution in the techniques he intends to execute. This Indian posture requires careful attention because the opponent has strength in the subjection and disposition to enter with his right foot.

To oppose this posture with certainty, the Diestro will take advantage of the virtual *atajos* from below. With only a movement of the hand, he will raise the center of his guard a little above the plane of the right-angle while, at the same time, lowering his point so that it is somewhat in the low line. In doing so, the weak of the Diestro's sword will not be subjected by the opponent's strength. Instead, the Diestro's strong opposes the opponent's weak and the quickness of the Diestro's point opposes the opponent's strong. As a result, since it is not possible for the opponent to defend the lower part and the breadth of his body with only his guard, the quickness of the Diestro's point will confound the opponent. Since the opponent cannot see where the Diestro's point moves when it is below, the opponent will be uncertain where to place his sword and the Diestro can take advantage of this to attack wherever the opponent is most open while always remaining defended by the superior part with his greatest strength, which is his guard, which is the shield of his defense.

---

<sup>1</sup> *postura indiana* – *indiano* refers to one of European origin born in the Americas, rather than being indigenous, who would be referred to as *indio*

**Diego Rodriguez de Guzman, *Carta apologética al Señor Marqués de las Torres de Rada***  
(Lima, 1707)

[Translated by Tim Rivera]

[1] Novelty is so dangerous in opinion and esteem that Plato judged it equally difficult to give novelty to the ancient and authority to the new. Antiquity has been able to claim esteem such that the highest blazons of religion, nobility, and military are accredited such that one who claims them is called old christian, ancient noble, or veteran soldier. The primary executions of the arts were called *primores*, because they were applied before other successes, which were later due to the patience of application or the liveliness of ingenuity. Because of that, the works that they seek to bring to light today, and whose doctrines include some novelty, should expect the severity of censure more than others. And thus, my concern yearns in this to achieve the enlightened shelter of Your Lordship's protection, so that the elevated laurels that crown your name defend me from the rays of calumny and mordacity.

[2] My pen is emboldened by the repeated examples of so many authors who have written, in theory as well as in the use and exercise of the *destreza* of the sword, very few of whom Your Lordship will find to have not opposed their predecessors, as I will manifest in this discourse, although it may appear as useless diligence in writing to Your Lordship, who is so well versed in all their doctrines, as manifest by your prodigious and admirable works.

[3] The first thing that I present to the high understanding of Your Lordship is that, having more than thirty-six years that I have applied myself to the study and exercise of this most noble discipline, I have handled the best books that have been written for its understanding. For its practice, at the beginning I received the doctrine of *don* Francisco Balavoso, and partly that of *don* Constantino Vasconzelos, with some generalities from *don* Geronimo de Carranza. Later, I was examined in the doctrine of *don* Luis Pacheco, and continuing my application, I have had innumerable acts and functions before the viceroys, with all the famous masters and accredited professors who have come from Europe. All being the impulse of my desire to investigate the ultimate secrets of the science, to which the destiny of my own inclination draws me with gentle violence. Having heard the enthusiastic applause with which fame proclaimed the exquisite successes of Captain Jacinto de Rada, a native of this city and originally from Pamplona, court of the kingdom of Navarre, I solicited his communication, finding in it much to admire and learn, from the excellence of his natural gifts, as well as from the clarity of his doctrine. Now, it is the full focus of my admiration, that our Catholic king and lord, monarch of two worlds, has been granted by heaven, in both spheres, two vassals of the same surname, and perhaps of one blood, who have advanced with such superior elevation an exercise so proper to their illustrious nobility. The sword being that which has always given credit and renown to the Spanish nation, and to the distinguished order of its acclaimed patron Santiago; now, due to its exercise that these two enlightened authors have illustrated, it will achieve more extensive blazons and more appreciable esteem.

[4] The doctrine of the distinguished *don* Jacinto was entrusted to the application of three affectionate professors, the first of which (as of all) is Captain Bartholomé Joseph de Agüero, a nobleman of this city, whose qualities obligate his esteem to be due to reason and not blindness of affection, finding in them honorable correspondence to the nobility of his illustrious blood, whose memories fill the histories of this new world. But also causing jealousy with what he acquired to what was inherited, he has achieved on his own merits the most proportionate fulfillment of his enlightened blazons. The second is Captain Joseph Zerdan, native of these kingdoms and originally from Aragon, in whom nobility adorned with valor and understanding and discretion varnished with studies and knowledge occur equally, to whose highlights this doctrine is owed its most celebrated extension. In imitation of

these two distinguished and famous gentlemen, I am the third disciple of *don* Jacinto, and also the first who has exposed his doctrine to public attention and plausible demonstrations – also being the first voluntary captive of those incredulous or ignorant who have wanted to practice their disillusionment with experience. Although not bound to the mechanical exercise to which the title of master is obliged for profit, being my ambition to investigate not only this aptitude, but all those that are subject to the liberal arts, that there will be none who know me who will not grant me the empire I have over them; that of *destreza* being one of those I have exercised most, with diversity of opponents and uniformity of doctrines in the practical and speculative parts. Having recognized thirty-three books composed by eighteen authors, whom the world venerates, and who serve as astonishment and confusion to me: astonishment when I read the elegance with which they speak, and confusion when I see the disgrace and obscurity with which they reason, presuming that they teach, since by introducing principles of philosophy, arithmetic, geometry, mathematics, and astrology, they burden those who intend to be professors of this aptitude with more precepts to achieve the success of its practice, than those who study all the others, which are only perceived through speculation.

[5] The progress of the work that I remit to Your Lordship will manifest to your elevated comprehension the appreciation with which my application has received your elegant and most useful works, seeking with affectionate determination and tireless study to achieve the high skills that are offered for common benefit by the seven distinguished books that Your Lordship has brought to public light. Of these, the first, on the formation of the *atajo*, was printed in Cádiz in a booklet, which I obtained at the hand of the Marquis of Villa-Rocha, my disciple, who (with the first rudiments of my doctrine) chased his ambitions in the kingdoms of Spain, where time has not given him space to manifest the *destreza* of the sword, but instead the generosity of his blood and honorable discharge of his post; since with mathematical demonstrations, he has defeated the tricks of envy, leaving his opposition without movement, while he passes to his presidency of Panama to continue his justified operations. The second is the one that Your Lordship printed in Madrid, in response to a paper that an anonymous author published on *destreza*;<sup>2</sup> I obtained it at the hand of the Most Reverend Father Master Fr. Joseph de Azcaray, professor of *Prima Scriptura* at the Royal University and most worthy provincial who was of the Order of Saint Augustine, to whom it was sent by Captain Joseph de Ibarra, excellent disciple of Your Lordship. On folio 8 it says: *The aficionado should not be so distrustful of himself, and so observant of the past, that he wants to blindly follow and imitate them, because not everything that the ancients used is the best. In this matter (as our master says), and in all others that are reached through study and exercise, no one who believed much came to know them with perfection, as self-satisfaction by credit alone is to make the will love with ignorance that which should be loved with the examination of understanding.*

[6] The purified truth in the *Crucible* of Your Lordship has made me, as an aficionado of this aptitude, not hesitate to manifest the doctrine that I remit to Your Lordship in twelve conclusions, without the suspicion of calumny that the vulgarity threatens, which praises and defends what it does not know, only because others have said it, always believing what antiquity accredits. Another elegant writer, also of our times, says that it is following comfort with the name of veneration, and giving to memory the admiration that is due to wisdom; but in the way that the philosopher said that truth came before Plato's doctrine, it has seemed better to me to see it as the guiding star of caution than to blindly surrender discourse to what authors write with such obscurity and confusion, because I do not think it necessary that all their propositions have to achieve the fortune and authority that the dogmas of Pythagoras achieved among the disciples of his school, who commonly repeated that it was enough to be maxims that he had written in order for everyone to believe them. Especially, I notice that on folio

248 of this *Crisol de la Verdad*, Your Lordship says that *in the writings of foreigners, nothing of use is found*. Then, speaking of the most celebrated authors of Spain, Your Lordship warns that *in their writings, no order or method is found, rather the same confusion and obscurity; and that it is impossible for one to attain anything of consideration, as the dispassionate who have read them attentively will confess; that if they know anything, it is more their own reasoning, or through much exercise, than through what they have taken from the books of the referred authors*.

[7] The vulgar understanding should well recognize the advantages they have today in this aptitude and in others, the less-labored lines of the moderns compared to how much prolixity the ancients wrote. As a poet says, speaking of the arts:

The arts have reached  
Such excellence,  
That anything today is better  
Than in the past.

[8] This is seen with greater clarity in the writings of Your Lordship where, with excessive enhancement, the smoothness of concepts, the ease of discourse, and the good method of executions are achieved. With this knowledge, I have animated my doubts, for taking Your Lordship's text as a guide, I will be able to entrust success to its direction, discussing this aptitude, and what the authors have written. In case the endeavor does not merit your acceptance, disillusionment will return the discourse to the prisons of silence.

[9] The fourth book of Your Lordship's that I have read is the one printed in Mexico, entitled *Los ocho Predicamentos de la Lógica, sobre el instrumento Armigero, Espada*, in which Your Lordship offers three other books of science, art, and experience, which I have obtained at the hand of Field Marshal *don Domingo de Gortazar*, of the Order of Calatrava, in the short time of six months after its printing, which was in the court of Madrid, in the past year of 1705. The book of science and art being a library of all arts and sciences, and that of experience being a school of the military discipline of all arms, in which the governor will find the defense of his plaza, the castellan, the security of his castle, and the soldier, an execution of his demonstrations, if they observe its doctrine with studiousness and care. In the book of experience, my application has discovered the esteem that Your Lordship has for the doctrine of *don Jacinto de Rada*, for which I must render to Your Lordship repeated thanks for how you favor it in your opposition, although with the title of posture – a defect of those who have manifested it over there – I will seek to declare that it is not, according to the reality of the doctrine that its invincible author communicated to me.

[10] On folio 263, Your Lordship says: Opposition against those who position themselves in the Indian posture, with the left collateral plane in front, from the mean of proportion.

TEXT

*In this posture, the Indians ordinarily position themselves, putting the left foot somewhat ahead of the right, and the hilt between the seventh and eighth line, in such a way that it corresponds to between the fifth and sixth horizontal planes, the pommel pointing to the diametrical of the chest and primary vertical. The sword is in the second line, which is the same as bringing the point to the obtuse angle, putting the left collateral plane in front, and with that placement of body, arm, and sword, they remove the disposition of the profile and much of the jurisdiction of the sword. If some contact or movement is made that can include the swords, cutting it, they throw themselves in to wound with great force. Thus, it is necessary that the diestro proceeds with great caution in the techniques that they have to form, because this Indian posture requires much attention, since they have the strength to subject and the disposition to enter with the right foot.*

[11] Your Lordship's authority compels my affectionate inclination to seek to better inform you in regard to the Indian *destreza*, of which you have received confused accounts, as manifest in the few (to no) rules you offer against it in your opposition, when your mastery is what handles the other doctrines discovered up to now, with such superior success and deserved acclaim.

[12] The first sentence for Indian *destreza* is the support of Your Lordship, where you say that *the body, arm, and sword placed in this posture removes the disposition of the profile and much of the jurisdiction of the sword*.

[13] Another is from our common master *don Luis Pacheco de Narvaez*, which is the indispensable rule of his doctrine: in order to go to the opponent to achieve defense and execute the techniques of first and second intention, there are no more than two paths, which are the profile of the body and posture of the sword. It then follows as evident consequence that for the Indian posture, there is no *destreza* invented that can oppose it, since it removes these two paths. Your Lordship's sentence is evident because the path of the jurisdiction of the sword is through contact or aggregation of the two swords, and this cannot be done without movement that fails to contain that of the Indian posture in order to contest the sword, due to having occupied the diametrical line of the chest, or primary vertical, where without exclusion of this sword, another cannot be introduced. If it will be attempted by some path, it will be with known risk to the opponent and real security to the one who is in the Indian posture, since Your Lordship says that *if some contact or movement is made that can include the swords, cutting it, they throw themselves in to wound with great force*. It is well recognized in such detailed reasons how insurmountable Your Lordship has seen this which you call the Indian posture, since having found neither path nor rule subject to science in order to contest it, you say: *Thus, it is necessary that the diestro proceeds with great caution in the techniques that they have to form*. In this, it is clearly seen that no science is found against the Indian posture, because in finding it, Your Lordship would not advise great caution. Nor can any of the techniques be formed against the Indian posture, which in the opinion of the authors are the *tajos*, half *tajos*, *reveses*, half *reveses*, and thrusts, with diversity of names. For the achievement of these, the authors invented distinct rules, some general and others particular, like that of narrowing, line in cross, above and below the strong, the mean of proportion, Your Lordship's proportional, and the proportionate, also the *atajo* in different forms (with its three requirements of subjection, disposition, and privation), the right angle, which is the miraculous discovery of *destreza* in the opinion of our common master and those who follow him, who are the same who have discovered these rules, for the formation of the techniques that are executed by the two referred paths. Since I have proven with the authority of Your Lordship that this Indian posture removes these two paths, it is evident that the techniques, the paths, and the rules invented by the other doctrines are of no effect against the Indian posture. The whole and the parts being placed in this posture, it cannot be altered by either of the two paths, much less by the sneakiness and techniques that are more fallible, for as Carranza says, *the more a technique is known, the less value it has*. This Indian posture includes them all, due to all its parts not being able to be altered by any path, because of which, Your Lordship says that *this Indian posture requires much attention, since they have the strength to subject and the disposition to enter with the right foot*. With this, it is proven that no *destreza* can oppose the Indian posture without much risk, except by defect or accident of the one who observes it, or by some unexpected guile of the one who opposes it, because it is certain that one of the prerogatives of the true *destreza* is strength, and the greatest defense is subjection. Your Lordship teaches it this way in the *Libro de los ocho Predicamentos*, where you say: *The greatest security is in subjecting the opponent's sword, and total security is in taking their life*. Also, in the *Libro de la Experiencia*, in the chapter on gripping the sword, Your Lordship says: *There is no greater defense than subjecting the opponent's instrument, but I would not advise anyone to go forcing it with the sword*. Your Lordship's

authority is so clear that when it would lack your support, it is reinforced by experience, which is what silences opinions, making its reality evident. Thus, it is an evident mathematical demonstration, subjecting the opponent's sword with the reserved or intense force, which accompanies touch, acquired through the repetition of action. It is apt for the Indian posture, where, as *don Luis* says, *reaching the opponent and being able to wound or spare them, without being reached or offended by them*. This being observed, this doctrine is the true science of the *destreza* of the sword, since one is secured with it from all the techniques, strikes, and subtlety that are attempted against it, being able to defend oneself with great security, or punish with the moderation of the inculpable guardianship, which the laws command, complying with those of both Christian and *diestro*.

[14] I will continue with the text of Your Lordship, in which you give the precepts to your followers to counter the Indian posture, while I proceed to declaring the origin, rules, and foundations of said posture, which it was until the great understanding of *don Jacinto de Rada* took it from this state, reducing it to solid foundations, certain maxims, and evident demonstrations. Your Lordship says: *so that our diestro counters this posture successfully, they will use our virtual inferior atajos, and thus from the plane of the right angle, with only the movement of the hand, they will raise the hilt somewhat more, and at the same time lower the point to participate in the low line, with which the weak of our sword will not be subject to their strong, but our strong opposed to their weak. The agility of the point is opposed to his strong, by means of which it is not possible for the opponent to defend the inferior part and the breadth of the body with only the hilt. With the velocity of the point, the diestro will be able to confuse them, and as they do not see where the inferior point goes, they are uncertain in knowing to which place they must attend. Taking advantage of this time, the diestro occupies that which he sees most uncovered, the superior part always remaining with the opposition of their greater force, which is the hilt, or shield of defense.*

[15] Although Your Lordship, with high intelligence and great speculation, has penetrated the solid foundations of Indian *destreza* and expressed them so lively and effectively in the referenced text, I must still make a courteous opposition to the weak remedies with which Your Lordship attempts to counter it. It's not possible for Your Lordship to forget that the aptitude you write about cannot be practiced among its professors without known rules and established principles to achieve its ends. Defense being the principal of *destreza*, and offense being the lesser principal, in this case serving this defense as a material and secondary object. In order to achieve either of these ends, the discipline must consist of certain rules and evident principles, so that it merits the rigorous name of science, this being its definition. Recognizing that in all of Your Lordship's text, I find none of these principles or rules, I find it impossible that with the documents given by Your Lordship, your *diestro* could counter what you call the Indian posture, which is fortified by the firmest and most adjusted precepts that the true *destreza* of the sword should have, as I have referred to and will try to demonstrate ahead.

[16] Your Lordship says to his *diestro*, by principle of his doctrine, that *to counter the Indian posture, they make use of the virtual inferior atajos, etc.* In the rules of *destreza*, no one would deny that the inferior sword is the more dangerous, and that the superior sword is more able to include movements, occupy space, and achieve executions as the superior agent, proceeding with the augmentation of lesser defensive substance through the decrease caused in the inferior patient, lacking all free action and voluntary movement. Philosophy teaches us this, but our common master *don Luis Pacheco*, being so excellent, by giving remedy to the impossible, has sought *seven ways to remove the sword from the dangerous place* to support his doctrine, calling the inferior place dangerous, and by another name calling it patient. One of his precepts for defense is that the *diestro* seeks to capture their opponent's sword, and this captivity is having it inferior. This proves with evidence that inferior *atajos* do not consist of certain rules or evident precepts. Then, it cannot be a remedy against the Indian posture,

which takes advantage of the prerogatives of the best place for the body, arm, and sword, the security of being able to wound with great force, the superiority of being able to subject the sword, and the disposition to be able to move to any place without hindrance – all of which Your Lordship has authorized in the referred text.

[17] Neither can this be a remedy against the Indian posture, which Your Lordship gives to his *diestro* when he says that *from the plane of the right angle with only the movement of the hand, they will raise the center of the hilt somewhat, and at the same time will lower the point to participate in the low line.* Anyone will concede that the hand is a part of the whole body, and that movement made with only that part cannot resist what is in potency. Moreover, there is a common and indubitable sentence which says: *The whole can do more than the part.* The Indian posture is fortified in all its parts, as it has the best place, the best disposition, and the greatest strength. Then, it cannot be countered with only the movement of the hand. And more, Your Lordship recognizing it in such potency, says: *And if any contact or movement is made, they throw themselves in to strike with great force.* Thus, the movement of the hand is not a sufficient remedy in order to not be in danger, even if raising the hilt and having the point participate in the low line, as then the one who follows the Indian doctrine is constituted in greater security, given that the more the point participates in low line, the more it moves away from the square of the chest and face, in order to not be wounded by the one in the Indian posture. The movement is necessarily longer, and the one of the Indian doctrine will have more time to include it; and to the one who includes the movement, there will be no *diestro* who will not concede superiority, because being a scientific *diestro* is nothing other than taking advantage of and including the movements of their opponent. Although the reason with which Your Lordship wants to assure their opposition is by saying: *With which, the weak of our sword will not be subject to their strong, but our strong opposed to their weak, and the agility of the point to their strong.* This sentence is a contradiction, as all that are given as advantage serve as a danger. Your Lordship says that *the Indian posture requires much attention, because they have the strength to subject.* Then the one subjecting, the other does not leave from the impediment, nor from the risk that they have in being subjected. With this, it is proven that with the opposition of greater strength, the Indian posture cannot be countered, due to occupying the line of the diameter, including the movement, and subjecting the opponent's sword, in which the point necessarily has to have delay and slowness, and not the agility that Your Lordship says, due to being subjected, and because in the movement made with only the hand by the one who has the strong on the weak, the circle of the point of their sword is very wide, and on the contrary for the one who has the weak on the strong, because the movement of the hand makes the circle of the point very small, as can be experienced by demonstration. To that which Your Lordship says, that *it is not possible for the opponent to defend the inferior part and the breadth of the body with only the hilt,* I respond with all those who profess *destreza* that the hilt cannot defend the body, nor its breadth, but only with the expulsion of the opposing instrument and introduction of their own, by means of the virtue of contact and occupation of the place. This is done with the sword, the body, and all its parts, keeping to the precepts and rules of science, not lifting the hilt and lowering the point, giving disposition to my opponent to subject me and alter the movement, the touch, and the strength, where I necessarily have to remain the inferior patient.

[18] The solidity and foundation of my reasoning are well known, since none of those that Your Lordship offers in your *destreza* are rules to counter my doctrine, and this is verified by what you advise when saying that *with the velocity of the point, the diestro will be able to confuse them.* Then, if they are not confused, these rules will not have been useful, which for the same reason are recognized as not being from the science of *destreza*, since they are only subject to chance, or contingency and accident; through contingencies, accidents, or chance, no science can be given. Especially when I have declared the place of the body, arm, and sword of the one in the Indian posture, and the place of the

point of the one who opposes it, which is remote from the square of the chest and impeded by the subjection that the one in the Indian posture has made, who one has their point near to the square of the opponent's chest, ready to occupy the convenient place, being superior, with the discrete and successive consonance that the agility of true *destreza* maintains for its executions. Thus, it will be impossible to confuse him while observing these rules.

[19] The text continues, and Your Lordship says: *And as they do not see where the inferior point goes, they are uncertain in knowing to which place they must attend.* With reason I could affirm that this proposition was not from Your Lordship's quiver, because how can I persuade myself that such an eminent author as Your Lordship, who has seen and speculated on all doctrines in the most opulent parts of Europe, can deny that the first foundation that the *diestro* needs to achieve the end of *destreza* is vision. If one has excess in the other parts that compose a perfect *diestro*, they will cease to be one if they lack the sight to comprehend the movement, the place, the subject, the action, and above all, the efficient and mediate cause of the instrument, from where the alteration of touch, movement, and strength proceeds, which is the greatest of alterations in *destreza*?

[20] From what has been said, it is inferred that the *diestro* should not watch their opponent's point as Your Lordship says. They should only attend to the efficient cause, which is the mover of the instrument, to achieve the end of *destreza*, with which they have to hinder the techniques and blows that the opponent tries to introduce, comprehending with sight where the lines originate, to offend them with the instrumental cause which is the sword, moved by the efficient cause which is the hand, where the *diestro* should point the tip of his sword, to alter its movement and include it. Once this is included, the corruption of one and generation of the other originates. It is also an evident principle that two heavy bodies cannot naturally fit in one place; the swords of the combatants are heavy bodies, therefore they cannot occupy the same place, and consequently the one who observes the Indian posture has to be superior.

[21] My doctrine makes use of this principle for the skill of its executions, covering the point where the opponent intends to introduce their sword, uncovering the opposite, and occupying the place to which it is inclined. This is done such that if the opponent wants to take with his sword the place of the diametric line of the chest, the one in the Indian posture has to occupy it first with body, arm, and sword, accompanied by sight, weight, touch, and strength, where it is impossible that, without the expulsion of this, another can be introduced.

[22] From these certain foundations, rules, and principles is composed that which should alone be called the true science of *destreza*, and not the Indian posture, because it is founded on self-defense as the principal basis of the Catholic religion. The best *destreza* is that which defends without offending, or being able to achieve with these referred principles which are infallible, because they are by universal cause, and necessary on the part of truth, which cannot fail. *And they are uncertain in knowing to what place they must attend*, as Your Lordship says, is by particular cause and contingent. This is fallible on the part of the subject, pertaining to accident and not to the reality of the substance.

[23] With these established principles, I can affirm with reason that Indian *destreza* is the true science of the sword, founded on infallible rules and precepts that Your Lordship authorizes and concedes, placing the body, as well as the arm and sword, in the best position to remove the best dispositions from one's opponent, remaining free from being unable to make any movement without being wounded with great force. Even though attempting subtlety in the techniques that Your Lordship charges, you concede the strength to subject and the disposition to pass with the right foot to the safest mean, with which it is verified that the operation against Indian *destreza* is fallible, and the inferior *atajos* being

more fallible, due to being contingent and accidental. Although its major rule is that *with only the movement of the hand, they raise their hilt, and their greater strength is opposed to the weakness of the Indian posture*, this is dispelled with the authority of *don Luis Pacheco*, in the formation of his general techniques, since none of them is formed by the agent placing the strong inferior to the opponent's weak. Rather, he commands that the weak is placed inferior or superior to the opponent's strong for the execution of the blow. Thus, with the strong of Your Lordship's sword opposing the weak of mine, I will have made the general of weak above the strong by the doctrine of *don Luis*, from where he affirms that one can wound with a thrust in the diametric line of the chest, or in the left collateral, according to the magnitude of the step.

[24] With this, it is clearly seen that whoever follows the opposition against the Indian posture cannot make any movement without the known risk of being wounded, due to the Indian *destreza* according to Your Lordship, and what I have proven, as well as by the doctrine of *don Luis* which I have cited. Moreover, *don Francisco Antonio de Ettenhard* strengthens it in his *Compendio*, page 172, where he says that the sword never is, nor can it be, *in a dangerous place, except when it is subjected and cut off by the opponent's*. Therefore, the Indian posture has subjected and detained the opponent's sword, with which it is verified to be in known danger, without the agility of the point being able to remove it from there, as Your Lordship supposes, so that the one in the Indian posture *is uncertain in knowing to what place they must attend*, being an evident demonstration that the one who subjects does not seek another place than where they are subjecting. Your Lordship advises the opposite in your doctrine, when saying: *taking advantage of this time, the diestro occupies that which he sees most uncovered*. This is evidently going with uncertainty, and not knowing which place should be occupied; nor does the one in the Indian posture have it open, except due to the contingency of carelessness, which is not sufficient for Indian *destreza*, nor for the practitioner who professes it. By means of what has been said, it should be affirmed with real and true evidence, that the opposition against the Indian posture doesn't have the strength to counter it, nor should it be given the title of science or art, due to not consisting of established principles, nor known rudiments, as the weakness of its foundations shows. Since Your Lordship, with the great experience that you have in this aptitude, both practical and speculative, in the recognition that you have had of all the foreign and Spanish authors as you say in your writings, has not been able to discover opposition subject to infallible rules against the Indian posture, I will be able to assure, in spite of the impatience of envy, that there is no *destreza* that can counter what Your Lordship has wanted to call the Indian posture.

[25] Your Lordship concludes his text by saying: *the superior part always remaining with the opposition of their greater force, which is the hilt, or shield of defense*. I cannot neglect to remind Your Lordship on this point; I ask, if the hilt defends the superior part, what guards the inferior? And if the greatest strength is conceded to the hilt, how does touch, place, and weight serve in *destreza*? And if this is the shield of defense, why is *destreza* not appropriated to it alone, in order to spare the authors from having sleeplessly investigated the means, the angles, the postures, the movements, the distances, the measures, the proportions, and all the other parts of which geometry, arithmetic, and philosophy consist, making them auxiliaries or administrators of this aptitude? Your Lordship not being ignorant that strength in *destreza* can be in two manners: one natural, and another artificial. The natural is that which was given its disposition by nature; the artificial is that which is acquired by exercise, by means of the repetition of actions. It accords with reason that the natural strength is increased in the sword by the composition of parts applied to it – this being what should be dealt with in *destreza*, and not of more or less quantity of sword, since with less, one can defeat the greater, having the whole and its essential parts, which are the proportionate place, the center, the diameter line, and the touch. It is not necessary to mention the movement, which is after all this, because should it have these referred parts, it does not lack necessary perfection. These being the essentials of the sword, the whole enters for the

perfect operation of them, with the strength of the body, which is the weight, this being of such magnitude in its augmentation that one has more strength in the inferior degrees of their sword than in the superior degrees of the opponent that does not have the same parts, this being a method that until now has lacked understanding. Since I have to refer Your Lordship to its requisites in a distinct treatise, I now suspend the pen, which already waits impatiently to slip free for a longer flight, directed to the common utility of the Christian republic. May Our Lord guard Your Lordship many years as I desire, etc. Lima, February 4, 1707. Kissing the hand of Your Lordship, your most humble servant, Diego Rodríguez de Guzmán, to the Marquis of the Torres de Rada.

## Diego Rodriguez de Guzman, *Doce conclusiones*

[Translated by Tim Rivera]

### First Conclusion

The *destreza* of the sword is a true science due to its demonstrations consisting of certain and evident principles.

### Second Conclusion

In the same way that all sciences have their principal and primary object, and a secondary and less principal object, so too does *destreza*.

### Third Conclusion

Although no author is found that assigns the causes of this science, the exemplar, efficient, formal, and instrumental causes are assignable and necessary.

### Fourth Conclusion

Conforming to natural and divine law, defense should look to three points, which are covering, uncovering, and occupying, with *destreza* not having a fixed or determined posture.

### Fifth Conclusion

The posture of the right angle, which up to now the authors have defended with more supposition as being the most universal and secure mean for defense, is mathematically demonstrated to be dangerous in *destreza*.

### Sixth Conclusion

The distances that the authors demand to be observed in the mean of proportion and proportionate means cannot be practiced in the true *destreza* of the sword, being those that are exercised by effective opponents that have free actions for their measures and voluntary movements for their defense.

### Seventh Conclusion

There is no specific quantity in the steps of true *destreza*, and they can begin moving forward with either foot, whose facility is only acquired with repetition and use of the actions.

### Eighth Conclusion

The *atajo*, which is commonly said to be a universal mean in order to reach the end of *destreza*, is not demonstrable, nor can defense be achieved with its effect.

### Ninth Conclusion

The four rules which the authors call generals do not belong to the true *destreza* of the sword, because they are only executed under the supposition of *esgrima*.

### Tenth Conclusion

The five species of strikes that are assigned in *destreza*, which are *tajo*, half *tajo*, *revés*, half *revés*, y thrust, with the others that the authors give with a variety of names, only belong to the vulgarity of fencers.

### Eleventh Conclusion

The techniques [*tretas*] are not properly of the scientific *destreza* of the sword, because their execution depends on the ignorance or alteration of the subject.

#### Twelfth Conclusion

The sword alone is advantageous over the sword and dagger, or sword and buckler, and is that which uniquely belongs to the true *destreza*.

**Francisco Lorenz de Rada, *Defensa de la verdadera destreza de las armas***  
(México: Viuda de Miguel de Ribera Calderón, 1712)

[Translated by Tim Rivera]

[p. 29]

[the marquis] advanced toward [Ibarra] directly and squared, with alternating steps like walking down the street

[p. 72]

one who places their arm and sword in this posture occupies a plane oblique to the horizontal, and not the primary vertical

[p. 74]

the opponent positioned with the left foot and left collateral plane forward, the right hand on the grip of the sword, and the left hand on the thirds of greatest strength

[p. 103]

so that from this posture, the arm and sword can be reduced to the plane of the right angle, the point of the sword has to descend (by means of the natural movement) one geometric foot of distance (with little difference), and at the same time (with a violent movement) the hand and arm have to ascend another of the same quantity

[p. 154]

having to move the body over the center of the left foot, in order to be able to change the planes, hiding the left and putting the right in front, thrusting at the same time

**Francisco Santos de la Paz, *Ilustración de la destreza indiana***  
(Lima: Jerónimo de Contreras y Alvarado, 1712)

[Translated by Tim Rivera]

[p. 160-1]

They don't make use of techniques, *atajos*, or withdrawing steps [*compases extraños*]... Their stance is as Your Lordship describes, placing the left foot ahead of the right, and the hilt between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> lines, but not between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> horizontals, instead at the 7<sup>th</sup>, where the pommel points to the diametric of the chest and primary vertical, and the sword in the 2<sup>nd</sup> line.

[p. 162-8]

In this same doctrine, the speculative depth and exquisite performance of Captain Diego Rodriguez is admirable in ensuring that the opponent doesn't occupy the diameter line, including the lines of the instrumental cause (which is the sword), through movement of the efficient cause of the impulse (which is the hand), and including this movement, it will remain superior, and covering the point where the opponent intends to introduce their sword, uncovering the opposing, and occupying the place where the combatant was inclined. And finding themselves oppressed, if they will retreat, allow them, and do not pursue their weak resistance; rather, with much gallantry and valor, remain in place and position, because it is said that there is no *destreza* invented for one who retreats, and that the art does not teach to battle with shadows, as is told of Hercules of Ocaña, or as signified by the adage of Erasmus: To grasp at the shadow instead of the body.<sup>3</sup>

If the opponent attacks to wound in the inferior line, they will be prevented by the greater reach to their face within the same position, being able to offend and remain defended, without it being necessary to attend to the parry. If the opponent aspires to give this strike is attempted by withdrawing the face, the same reach is achieved in their body.

If they attack in the superior line, they recognize (due to the sword being diagonal, and it being necessary due to this to come on the inside) that he always remains with the point directly to the opponent's face, with which they will come to wound themselves, and the opponent's sword climbing up or outside the scope of the body. If the opponent throws themselves in, wanting to wound and executing this strike with some step, our Rodriguez doesn't make another, due to no other disposition being necessary than that of positioning the impulse over the center of weight of the body, with which the opponent's sword is deviated and his is left with perfection and liberty. Even if the opponent is very skilled and proceeds very hastily, that doesn't achieve the effect of altering it, but rather transferring in themselves the force that they bring, by only making the sword slightly more obtuse in its movement and withdrawing the arm somewhat, making it fall on it by degree, and it is found more intense and concentrated in angle, and the other more separated from their parts, and achieving doubled strength on it, and consequently not undoing the form of the angle, remaining able to wound with complete safety. And if the opponent tries to impede it by covering the point, that does not cause him to cease to remain in his aptitude. If they want to execute the strike on the outside, he has it at the point of the right collateral, because he comprehends through knowledge of the effects that can come from the cause that the opponent gives. And as Aristotle says that prime material is pure potency due to a substance in it being apt to receive various forms, he makes use of the comprehension of what the opponent can execute at the moment of their attack, and by means of this, leaves them incapable of impeding the execution of his entry. If they want to strike on the inside, it is secured by occupying the

---

3 *Umbra pro corpore captare*

position left by the opponent's sword, since in the true *destreza*, every time the sword is absent, the body has to supplement that void by occupying it; the sword may also do it, as no vacuum is permitted in nature. And seeing that the point has been covered with the hilt, he enters with renewed superiority through the subjection of the sword, obligating the opponent to apply much force in order to lift it, which cannot be done (because they are made to alter it) without ever losing the integrity of the body, the firmness of the stance, or the form, measure, and proportion of their valiant resistance. This is worthy of attention, on which are founded all the precepts and rules that Your Lordship discusses and shows in order to contrast this doctrine, in propositions that take for granted that after the attack, one who would follow this *destreza* will make a deflection, and that this deflection will be followed by this strike or the other – all this precaution is dispelled by advising that this master doesn't use a deflection against any of these techniques that Your Lordship shows since, without undoing of form of his angle, altering the sword from what was introduced, his remains direct and closer with the occupation that is done.

For the same reason, they can't make use of the semicircles that Your Lordship teaches to his *diestro*, advising that they repeat them below the opponent's sword, moving the point of theirs continuously, similar to a clock pendulum. His great knowledge prevents that which can result from them, and placing the point of his sword somewhat more than one palm<sup>4</sup> over the opponent's hilt, he not only impedes the adversary's action, but also frustrates the sneakiness, without allowing that fruitless movement to pass, nor permitting it to come to deviate his sword, because besides finding it powerful and strong in the resistance, as it is close to the center and favored by the weight of the body, it goes beyond determining the opponent's movement, making it necessary to deal with no more than his defense, and to lose the hope of their prepared semicircles and deceitful movements.

The execution of this doctrine being so infallible that it not only achieves superiority in the concourse of equal weapons, but also with the opponent having the apparent advantage of being armed with two weapons: sword and dagger. Since even with them, they experience the difficulty of resisting the sword alone, with respect to having the value of them scattered, and necessarily having to attend to two parts, not being able to make two movements at the same time, because of two distinct cares not being able to fit together into the human chest. The skilled professor of this doctrine being compelled to work with their sword alone against that instrument that, between the two weapons, the opponent designates as principal by placing it forward, they proceed with more freedom than the one against the sword alone, because when the opponent intends to apply the dagger and beat the point of the sword, they uncover the same line they covered and leave room to make use of the movement. In the case of uniting the two weapons in order to move them at the same time, move to subject them with the sword alone accompanied by equal strength of the whole and its parts, and with full liberty and sure defense.

---

4 A unit of length about 8 inches or 20 cm.