

Selected excerpts from

**Art of Fencing**  
by **Maestro Domingo Luis Godinho**

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## 1. First Chapter

What must first be advised to those with curiosity that will have to learn this art, is that its masters declare to the disciples the three general rules, whereby he who plays the single sword can easily come to understand it. The first is that every time that a person would be attacked by his opponent on the right side, whether by a *reves* or any thrust, it has to be defended with a nails-down thrust. The second is that every time that one would be attacked on the left side, whether by a *tajo* or any thrust, it has to be defended nails up. The third is that it not only has to be defended by being parried, but with said thrusts injuring the enemy, noting that the thrust has to be given to where the opponent's blow goes to stop. In this manner, if the opponent's *reves* goes to the head, the thrust is given in counter in the face or in the shoulder, and if the *reves* or thrust goes to the thigh, the thrust is given in counter in the opponent's thigh, and if the *tajo* or thrust goes to the face, the counter should also go to the opponent's face or chest. In conclusion, the third rule is that the counters have to be given in the same height that the opponent's blow goes.

## 5. Fifth Chapter

Done with the step, the disciple will be positioned with feet together, and putting in the right foot, he will put in a *tajo*, extending as much as he will be able, and when the *tajo* goes withdrawing, at the same time he withdraws the foot that he has placed, putting it where he took it. Then he returns to put in a *reves*, extending it the most that he will be able, and in the *reves* passing, he withdraws the foot like he withdrew with the *tajo*. Then he puts in a *tajo* with left foot, making mention that when there is more than one opponent, when he would be putting in the left foot, it should not be straight from the other, but in a manner that it reaches more to the left side. Then in this form, he puts in the right foot with a *reves*, and goes cutting with this step however which will be necessary, taking note that the eyes should go always to where the blow goes. Being necessary to retreat, he should leave by placing the feet with the same step, giving the parry to those of the left side nails-up, and to those of the right side nails-down, not making a circle with his sword when he goes turning the sword from nails-up to nails-down, only turning at the wrist.

## 7. Chapter Seven

Breaking [*romper*] and ripping [*rasgar*] are the same thing, like how we say *surdo* or *izquierdo*, which are the same thing [left]. When battling, if the opponent on one side lowers his sword until it is in front of the belt, and he would be attacked with a thrust to the eyes, this can be ripped, along with all the others that would be committed in the time that the opponent would have his sword low. In order to rip, he has to be nails-down, then lifting the sword suddenly, it meets with the enemy's sword, and at the same time he goes delivering a ripped *tajo* from the enemy's left shoulder to the right knee, the sword ending nails-up loaded on one's left side. Then, lifting the sword suddenly, it meets the same sword, and at the same time he gives a *reves*, making a circle, from the right shoulder to the left knee. All the times that he finishes ripping, he ends armed nails-up with the sword high.

## 10. Chapter Ten

The master has an obligation to declare to his disciples, in words and doctrine, the particular causes and names that they give to the arms and, before he would put them in play, to make them informed of all. *Tajo* is a blow that is given with necessary force to the left side of the opponent. *Reves* is a blow that has to be given with necessary force on the right side of the opponent. Freeing [*librar*] is when the opponent will go to undo the blow which one brings to injure, that one lowers with such speed that the opponent does not find the sword. *Garatusa* is when two are established nails-up, one of them would gain the opponent's sword in this same posture from above, well along the length, and go twisting the hand in a manner that his sword gives a turn around the opponent's. *Mandoble* is that all the times that the two will come to cross low, one of them turns with *reves* to the opponent's head, not that the arm lifts, only from the wrist. From the wrist is when the blows that have to be given with the strength of the arm are given only by twisting the hand with the joint that is between the hand and the arm. Testing [*tentar*] is when the two are established, the opponent brings the point of his sword to the point of the opponent's. Gaining [*ganar*] is when my sword reaches up to the middle of the sword, taking control of the enemy's.

## 22. Chapter Twenty-two

Established nails-up, if one of the two lowers, the opponent parts with a nails-up thrust to the chest. If the opponent will not counter it by the same edges with another nails-up thrust, and will press on it to his left side, the enemy will free with due speed and give a nails-down thrust in the chest. If the opponent will be undoing this thrust, pressing on it to the right side, the same that commits it leaves with a high *tajo* that leaves the face guarded with the quillons. Again, if they will go to parry it, leave with a *reves*, leaving the quillons covering the face in a manner that the enemy is not able to wound with some blow that he may throw.

#### 4. Fourth Chapter on the Shield

Established nails-down, the shield will be in front of the chest, one palm distant, with the arm circled, and the right breast uncovered. If the opponent will go to test the sword, before it arrives, you will give a *reves* in the leg, not taking the shield from its place. The enemy will be able to lift the leg, so that it passes in vain, and travel to thrust nails up to the chest, which the opponent will be able to defend by the same edges with a nails-up thrust. The opponent can undo this thrust to his right side with the shield and give a nails-down thrust in the thigh, putting in the left foot, covering the left facing with the shield.

##### 1. First Chapter on the Two Swords in Rules

The two swords drawn, one will withdraw the one in the left hand below the right arm, and the one in the right hand will be placed nails-down above the head. Putting in the left foot, that in another tongue is called *surdo*, one will throw a *reves* with the left arm and a *tajo* with the right arm, at the same time – These two blows will end with the left sword above the head nails-down, and the sword in the right arm below the one in the left hand. Then one will put in the right foot with a *reves* with the right arm and a *tajo* with the left arm, the swords ending in the first posture, which is the left arm below the right, and the right nails-down above the head. These two steps done, they will return to do others like them, continuing the two blows of *tajo* and *reves* in said manner, always responding to each step of the foot with a *tajo* and *reves*, the swords always ending as it is said in the two steps, and during the battle, continue the step and blows without change – If there will only be one opponent, or at most two and no more, you will be able to do this same rule with thrusts, putting the right foot in with a nails-down thrust with the right arm and a nails-up thrust with the left arm, the left sword ending below that of the right arm. Then return, putting the left foot in with a nails-down thrust with the left arm and a nails-up thrust with the right arm. These two steps done, you will continue forward with the order of the above *tajos* and *reveses*. You will also be able to give these two thrusts nails-down from the hilt [*de puño*], as it is said in the single sword, giving them with a throw [*de arremeço*], keeping to the order above; that is: two thrusts at each step of the foot.

#### 4. Chapter Four on the Dagger

Established nails-up, if the opponent will go to test your sword, free and give a nails-up thrust on the outside in the right shoulder, which he can refute with the dagger to his right side and give a nails-up thrust in the belly, not entering more than enough so that the thrust reaches. When committing this thrust, take note that the sword has to withdraw so that it does not meet with the opponent's.

#### 4. Fourth Rule of the Montante

You will take hold of the *montante* in the manner of Chapter 3, and putting in the right foot, you will play a *tajo* to the legs of the shield bearer. The *tajo* goes cutting until turning above your head, and the *montante* ends armed for a *reves*, nails-up with the point to the floor, the quillions covering your head. Then, putting in the left foot, you will play a *reves* to the legs, giving a turn with the *montante* until it stops above your head with the point to the floor and the quillions covering your head. The point that ends at the floor like this has to be nails-down because then the *tajo* is armed. With these two steps of *tajo* and *reves*, you will give battle as long as it will be necessary. Note that the points that I make mention of in this rule are not committed thrusts, just armed, so that the shield bearer does not slip in below. Because of that, they go positioned to the floor like this, and time is not wasted on them, as in order to have a *tajo* or *reves* armed, the *montante* necessarily has to be turned in that manner, making two movements. In the manner pointed out, one movement is made.

#### 10. Tenth Rule

One must have much acuity and speed, and great vigor in being surrounded by opponents in a battle. With much speed, one takes his *montante* by the form in Rule 3. Positioned in the middle of them, bending at the knees with the head straight, established on the left foot, he cuts a *tajo*. Then he cuts another putting in the right foot, in a manner that he goes sideways, alternating left and right foot, cutting *tajos* in a continuous motion, circling himself in a wheel with the *montante*, giving a *tajo* at each step, which may be up to three or four, and not passing five because of the danger that it can have in weakening the head. These steps with *tajos* finished, he returns to where he started with other steps with *reveses*, in the same order as the *tajos*, giving a *reves* at each step of the foot, and circling his whole body with the *reves*. Note that when you go turning with said blows, the feet are placed surely, and more than this, they are placed straight, one of the other always remaining, and the body always going very upright, the face alternating from one side to the other. In this manner, with the steps with *tajos*, then with *reveses*, to one side and to the other, he will do these steps for as long as the battle lasts. Take note that if you will be surrounded in a wide field, that when you will give the steps, they aren't always to one side, returning to the part to where you had left, but continuing said steps, first to one side, then to another, running the whole circuit in a wheel. If one will be doing it in a wide street, make the steps to one side and the other. Take note that in no manner is there a thrust. If it happens that you have to break the squad of enemies that keeps you surrounded, you will go pressing with the step to the side where you will see more weakness, and arriving close you will shout with a loud voice, and at the same time, you will give a nails-up thrust to that side with a big leap in a circle, and at the end of the thrust, a *tajo* and *reves*. Being outside, take advantage of them with Rule 9. You will have such advice that the moment you will go surrounded, that you always press to the side to where the opponents will have more strength.