

The Guardian

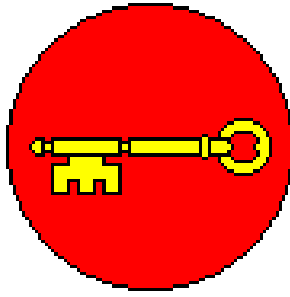
January AS XLIV



Winter 2010

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Cover Photo: Redoubt Volcano April 18 2009 By: Ragnsteinn fra Andressmyri
Heraldrydiculous by: Master Khevron, printed with permission



Greetings Good People of Oertha!

As I write the winds are blowing outside making the windows whistle strangely when it catches them just right. Nights like this in the Middle Ages were a time for folks to gather close and share a fire, stories and songs. Warm hospitality welcomed the cold and weary traveler, a place of honor at the feasting table. A time to renew the bonds of past friendships and the forging of new ones. And so we gather at upcoming events, A&S night and bardics in our fair land, opening our doors to all who would partake of fellowship and good food. Our membership numbers are growing, so many new and returning players.

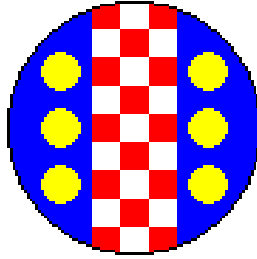
One would think that with the coming of the snow there would be less to do. In reality there seems to be more... new garb, new projects, old projects clambering for attention, in addition to the business of everyday living and just staying warm. Winter is the perfect time to dedicate to the expansion of our skills in the Arts and Sciences. I look forward to seeing all the entries for the Coronet A&S competitions.

To help you plan this next few months' calendaring, here is a basic list of what, when and where. Upcoming events will have details posted to the Lists, websites and newsletters as they come available. I encourage folks to volunteer as autocrats or as their helpers. As a wise woman once told me, the more involved you are the more fun you have!

Feb 27	Winter's Gate	Hearts Revel
March 13	Eskalya	TBA
March 27	Winter's Gate	Shakespeare
April 3	Selviergard	Fools Revel
April 17	Pavlok Gorod	TBA
April 24	Winter's Gate	Fools Revel
May 8	Earngyld	Ice Saints
May 15	Eskalya	May Revel
May 22-23	Winter's Gate	May Captaincy
May 29-31	Selviergard	Baronial Changeover/Investiture

There are many events throughout the land of Oertha so travel where you can (road trips and carpooling can be great fun!) and join your cousins in the sharing of the Dream.

**Grins,
Heleyne
Principality Seneschal**



Greetings from the Principality Exchequer;

As of the end of 2009, this is the current standing of Oertha's accounts:

Funds not earning interest: \$4076.70

Funds earning interest: \$3723.39

Regalia & Non-depreciated equipment: \$921.62

Depreciated equipment: \$2475 (minus \$1202.03 in depreciation)

Other assets: \$200 (site deposit for Winter Coronet)

We have sold all the fundraiser cookbooks - thanks everyone! Anyone who would like to see the full Q4 report, I will have it at Coronet with me; feel free to contact me for a copy.

Congratulations and thanks to all the branch exchequers for being on the ball with their reports and NMS payments! Q4 and Domesday reports will be due around the end of January - exchequers will be getting further information from me directly.

I am currently working on a financial policy for approving purchases with Principality funds. Anyone wishing to take a look at the draft policy or with suggestions and concerns should contact me or another member of the Financial Committee (the Coronets and Seneschal). Input from all members of the principality is welcome and encouraged! You can reach me by email at [Removed] or by phone at [Removed]. I will have some copies of the draft policy at Coronet - see me if you'd like a copy, or just want to take a look!

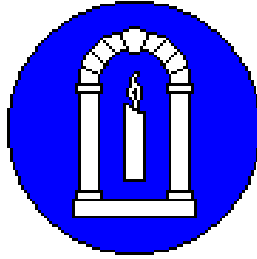
I am actively seeking a deputy successor. My warrant expires January 2011. You must be a paid member of the SCA to take the office. Training is available! Skills needed: communication skills; access to a computer and internet; phone access is required if internet is not available; ability to use Excel or similar spreadsheet program very helpful (or the ability to learn). The office typically requires anywhere from 0 to 40 hours a month of work (depending on if it's a month when quarterly reports are due!).

If you're intimidated by the idea of taking the Principality exchequer office but are interested in the office of exchequer, see me anyway! I can connect you with your local officer for an introduction to the position - more deputies are a good thing! This office is a great way to be an active member of your group, and to learn how the business side of the SCA works!

in service,

Caitriona inghean ui Chionaodha

Principality Exchequer



Greetings from the Principality Arts and Science Officer,

Just wanted to let everybody know who you're A&S Officers are:

Eskalya: Annah Narie (Georia Pfile)
Selviargard: Rolynda of the Azure Stone (Rolynda Standridge)
Wintersgate: Margary Griffen (Michelle Garrett)
Pavlok Garod: Tama Evstokh'eva (Tami Fogle)
Hrafnafjordr: Adisa Ulfsdottir (Debra Jackson)
Yns Taltreath: Merewyn of Yns Taltreath (Lorena Goertz)
St. Boniface: Adalaide Webster (Deanna Lazarus)
St. Guinefort: Seneschal – Alaryn Aecenstaeff (Ed Branscum)

From the reports I have received most of the various branches are staying active with a variety of interesting A&S activities.

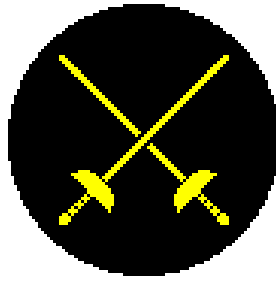
Looking forward to the A&S activities at Winter Coronet and the months to follow.

YiS

Elizabeth deGresse

Oertha A&S Officer

Bear Steel School of Fence
Practices started off again on 12 Jan (Tuesday).
Contact Mistress Sorcha for more Information.



Greetings,

Recently our Kingdom Rapier Marshal, Lord Staffan Arffuidrudsson, has put out a call for those rapier fighters of the West who are interested in Melee to redouble their efforts to train and support the West Kingdom at war. At recent wars the numbers of fighters over all from the West has been lower than in past year, but especially on the rapier field. Much of this can probably be attributed to economic pressures, and particularly in our remote Principality where travel to Wars can be prohibitively expensive. However, if you are interested in War scenarios, training for melee combat, learning about tactics of melee combat or an opportunity to just see if melee is something you might enjoy from either a combat or marshaling viewpoint, please contact your Principality Rapier Marshal at: [\[Removed\]](#)

Put "melee" in the title of the message please so I can make sure to not miss your email.

Don Alaryn Aecanstaeff - OWWS
Oerthan Principality Rapier Marshal
Princesses Rapier Champion





Greetings

Apparently Yahoo swallowed my attempt to change the notice for this month as it was decided back in November that A&S would be on break until February do to the holidays and Coronet. There are days I think my computer is deliberately impudent and does not do what I ask it to do. I am sorry for the lateness of this posting. We will have A&S in February but there is not a class scheduled for tonight.

YIS

Margaret Anne

Fighter's Bill of Rights

Fighters in the Society are in many ways like the Air Force flyers I take care of in my mundane job: very independent - not wanting anyone to tell them what to do. This gets to be a real touchy situation in the Lists when a fighter is injured and does not want to leave the field, even though continuing may cause the injury to become worse. Society Law prohibits the Chirurgeon from removing a fighter from the field against their will. To help fighters and Chirurgeons work better together, let me present the "Fighter's Bill of Rights" as written and presented at a Chirurgeon's conference at Estrella War by Lady Selena D'Ambra in AS XXX, formulated as a statement from the fighter to the Chirurgeon:

If I refuse care and I am oriented and coherent (even if annoyed, preoccupied or angry), that is my LEGAL RIGHT.

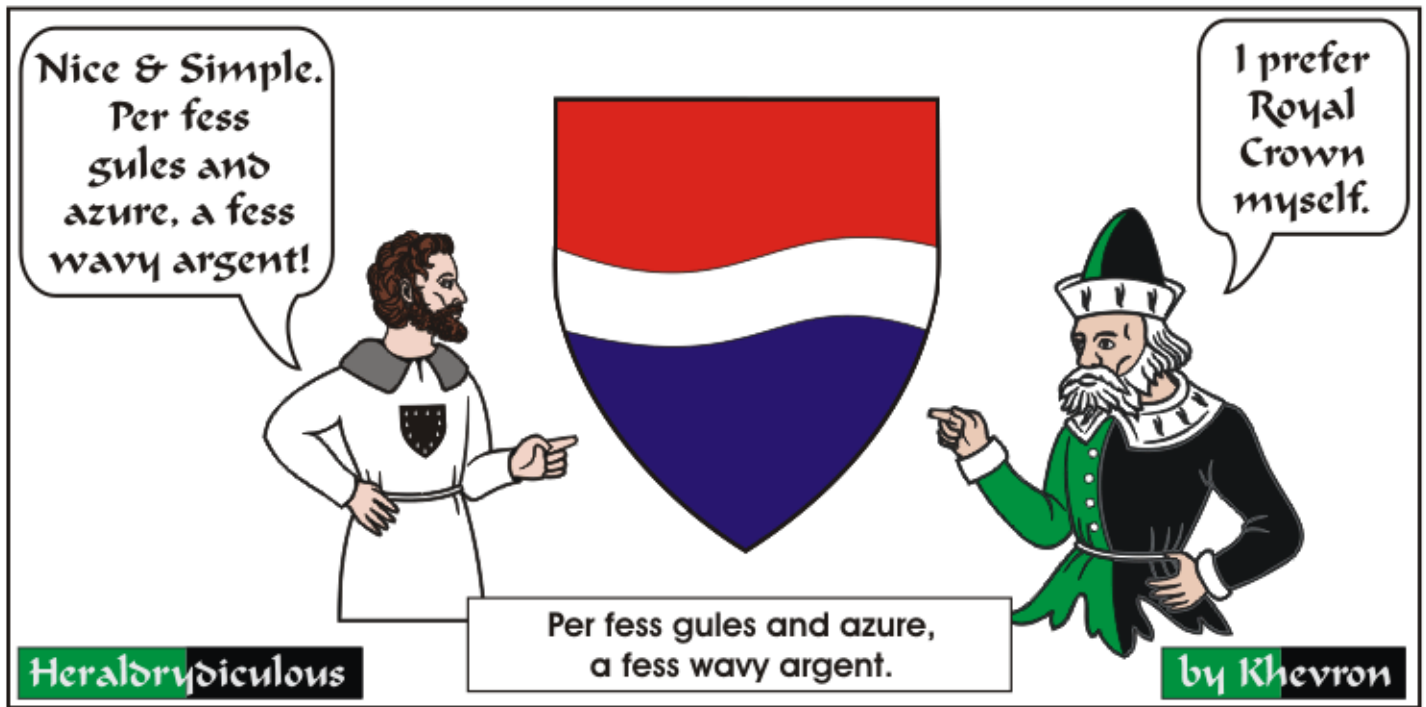
It is up to me whether or not I go back to fighting. I am an adult with a signed waiver. If you feel I am in danger to other fighters or myself, tell a marshal of your concerns. But quietly please, so if either of us is wrong, neither of us will be embarrassed.

If I am injured, ask questions of and listen to me and my friends and family. Like me, they also know what is normal for me and how my armor goes on and comes off.

Before you do anything, from slapping a cool cloth on my neck to cutting my armor, ask me. Maybe I'll like it, maybe I'll club you like a baby harp seal.

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[Removed]. The Fighter's Bill of Rights is ©Lady Selena D'Ambra, used with permission



Combat Archery

As of November, I am now able to authorize new combat archers. If you are interested in classes or in getting authorized, please email me at **[Removed]** or catch me at Coronet.

A new blunt, referred to as the CUBB or Fathead, was approved at Society level back in the summer and has just been approved for use in the West. It was in use at Pennsic with very good reviews in safety and ease of use. The Fathead is a pre-made blunt, which can save a lot of time on arrow construction. They are currently running \$2.50 per blunt and are available through North Star Archery, separately or as part of a kit along with fiberglass shafts and Asgard (premade) APD's. Sir Erica can include the construction instructions with the blunts, or you can get a copy from me. I plan to bring a Fathead with me to Coronet, along with a few handouts about combat archery in general. There are other options for homemade blunts and APD's for those who are interested or want to save a little money. Whichever you choose, expect to explain the construction process in detail at the time of authorization.

The new Royal Archer, Baron Achmere ib Tamin, writes that he "intend(s) to stress getting people into Combat Archery during my tenure as Royal Archer." To make that easier, the SCA-West_Archery Yahoo Group has new/updated files on where to get armor and materials for bolt and arrow construction, the West Kingdom combat archery rules, and how to go about getting authorized. Information is also available on the Kingdom of the West Archery Guild website at <http://www.westkingdomarchery.com/combat.html>.

In Service

Viscountess Elisa

What is a Chirurgeon?

A chirurgeon is a member of The Chirurgeonate. The Chirurgeonate is the volunteer first-aid organization of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. Chirurgeons are both volunteer first aiders and warranted at-large officers of the SCA. Chirurgeons are warranted and sanctioned to provide volunteer first aid at SCA events and serve in chirurgeon-specific offices.

What do Chirurgeon's do?

First, chirurgeons CANNOT force a conscious person to accept treatment without his or her consent. We provide basic first aid. All service in the Chirurgeonate is on a volunteer basis. No one can place a chirurgeon on duty as a first-aid provider for any portion of an event if that individual is unwilling to work as a first aider at that time. If a chirurgeon is available, willing, and designated to give first aid at an event, they must provide that first aid to all who request it. Chirurgeons do not function as "health care providers" or "medical care providers" any care they provided beyond basic first aid is done so outside the bounds of the SCA and is under the auspices of that individual's legal professional license.

How do I become a Chirurgeon?

In order to become a fully warranted Chirurgeon, you must meet the following conditions (as outlined in the SCA's Chirurgeon's Handbook located at the following web location:

<http://www.sca.org/officers/chirurgeon/ChirurgeonsHandbook2007.txt>)

- You must serve an observation period as a Chirurgeon-in-Training for evaluation of attitude, demeanor, and training in SCA-specific knowledge such as the rules for armored combat and the contents of the Chirurgeon's Handbook.
- You must be as old as or older than the legal age of majority in the state, province, territory, and/or country where you live.
- You must possess a current first-aid certification or acceptable alternative
- You must possess a current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification
- You must be a member of the SCA. The type of membership must provide immediate access to your Kingdom newsletter.
- You must provide the following to your Kingdom Chirurgeon:
 - Proof of age of majority (a copy of your driver's license should suffice)
 - A copy of your first-aid or medical credentials
 - A copy of your CPR certification
 - Proof of SCA membership

How many warranted Chirurgeon's do we have in Oertha?

Three. Breock of Whitby (Eskalya), Patricia MacAndrew (Earngyld), And Amber of Hrafnsfjodr (Hrafnsfjodr)

Are Chirurgeons required officers for local branches?

No. Kingdoms and Principalities are required to fill this position. It would be nice to have one for each Barony & Shire in Oertha, if we can find people who meet the above qualifications and are willing to serve.

Whom can I contact for more information?

Breck of Whitby (S. Breck Spencer, **[Removed]**, Anchorage AK 99504; **[Removed]**; **[Removed]**)

The Society Chirurgeonate web presence: <http://www.sca.org/officers/chirurgeon/welcome.html>

Chirurgeon's Point, an unofficial point of reference: <http://www.chirurgeon.org/index.shtml>

Letter of Dance

The Letter of Dance is a research publication that supports the efforts of the dance and music communities both within and outside of the SCA. Issue 55, published this fall/winter, is currently available at <http://earngyld.org/letterofdance.html> while it awaits conversion to the permanent website. If you'd like a paper copy, contact me at shusmarx at yahoo.com or catch me at Coronet. I still have a couple of hard copies available. Older issues (through approximately issue 31) are available through the permanent website at <http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/lod/> and more will be added as they are converted.

I am also always looking for articles to publish. Submissions are welcomed on any topic related to dance and music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, in any country, and in any style that can be documented to that period. Please send submissions to the editor (me) at shusmarx at yahoo.com. APA format is preferred but not required. Long articles may be broken into smaller articles over several issues. See the inside cover (page 2) of this issue for further information.

In Service

Viscountess Elisa

What is Honor?

Ask 100 people in the SCA what honor is, and you will get 100 different answers. None of these answers will be wrong, and all of them are right in their own context. So as I stand on this Oerthan Pedestal, I will take the opportunity to provide you with my most simple definition. Honor is doing the right thing, not for reward, award or personal recognition, but because it is the right thing to do.

The Perfect Fight of George Silver

An introduction to the principles of the true fight of George silver

By: Don Alaryn Aecanstaeff – OWWS
Provost, West Kingdom Guild of Defense
(mka Edgar V. Branscum)

Brief Biography of George Silver:

George Silver, born into the English gentry, would not have been a professional fencing teacher. Professional fencing instructors of this era were thought to be equivalent of "blue collar" workers today. Eleventh in descent from Sir Bartholomew Silver, who had been knighted by Edward II and was the eldest of four brothers, such a profession was considered to be far below his social standing. We have no evidence that George Silver ever formally taught what has become known as his system of fighting; however, we do know that Silver considered it the duty of a Gentleman to be able to come to the defense of his Prince or Kingdom. In addition, his younger brother Toby was also an accomplished swordsman. Silver, probably at the very least, practiced with others who were interested in learning the skills and knowledge that he had at his disposal.

Silver did however have a familiarity with the fencing schools of the time and the systems of defense that they taught. Silver objected to the Englishmen turning to foreign weapons and styles of fighting. Instead, Silver championed the native English martial arts while objecting on ethical and technical grounds to the fashionable continental rapier systems being taught at the time. He particularly disliked the immigrant Italian fencing masters Rocco Bonetti and Vincentio Saviolo, going so far as to challenge Saviolo to a public display of skill at arms.

His major objections to the rapier itself and to its instructor's methods of teaching were outlined in his 1599 work, *Paradoxes of Defence*.

He later wrote his *Brief Instructions on my Paradoxes of Defence* sometime before 1605, in which he explained in some detail his method of using his preferred weapons. This however remained an

unpublished manuscript until its discovery in a collection of manuscripts in 1898 by fencing historian Captain Cyril G. R. Matthey.

Silver recommended a highly defensive system that he deemed suitable for self-defense in dueling, street defense and the battlefield rather than what he deemed the purely dueling orientation of the rapier.

The preferred weapon of George Silver:

Weapons systems usually focus on a core weapon, and George Silver is no different in this respect. Although George Silver touched upon more than one weapons form, including sword and dagger, sword and buckler and the pike and staff, for the purposes of this discussion I will be concentrating on one aspect of his system, the single sword.

Silver advises his readers to use a “light short sword of perfect length” (*George silver, Paradoxes of Defence, 1599, James L. Jackson, Three Elizabethan Fencing Manuals, 2001, p. 526*). This does not mean a short sword as we may be used to thinking of it in our era however. The sword silver used was a sword designed for military and civilian use. The sword of Silvers preference usually came in one of two blade styles, the ‘Backsword”, which had a wedged shape blade with a single edge and a broader blunt back, becoming double edged somewhere between halfway to two thirds of the way down the blade.

The other blade, the “Broadsword” had cutting edges down the entire length of both sides of the blade. This weapon should also, according to Silver, have sufficient hand protection to keep its user from suffering an injury to the hand. For this he advocated the use of a basket hilt. Silvers choice of swords was a deliberate one, which was an outgrowth of his personal views on martial capabilities. He viewed that any martial art should be one that could be used in the service of ones’ Prince in war if needed; he deemed the rapier blade to be of insufficient strength to withstand the rigors of a battlefield.

Silver asserted that the perfect length of the weapon would be dependant on the stature of the person wielding it. The measure used to find the proper length is that the users sword should be short enough for the point to be drawn on the inside portion a dagger held in the outstretched left hand, as in the illustration as shown below.

Principles of the “True Fight”:

Silver asserted that all his knowledge and skill at arms was aimed at one thing, survival. One of the most central things Silver wanted his readers to understand was that coming home alive is the most important thing about any fight; killing your opponent is secondary. According to George Silver, the “True Fight” (*George silver, Paradoxes of Defence, 1599, James L. Jackson, Three Elizabethan Fencing Manuals, 2001, p. 521,523, 524, 551, 555, 557, 560, 568*) has universal “Grounds” and not adhering to them results in what he calls the “Imperfect Fight” (*George silver, Paradoxes of Defence, 1599, James L. Jackson, Three Elizabethan Fencing Manuals, 2001, p. 494, 495, 499, 522, 551, 552, 553, 555*) or a fight in which you do not control and thus put yourself at risk of injury or death. Silver also states that although an imperfect fight may be an offensively strong fight, it will inevitably be defensively weak. Therefore, according to Silvers philosophy, the “true fight” has control of the fight both offensively and defensively.

“There is no perfect fight without both blow and thrust” - Silvers 12th paradox (*George silver, Paradoxes of Defence, 1599, James L. Jackson, Three Elizabethan Fencing Manuals, 2001, p. 517*)While Silver was of the opinion that the cutting blow was a more effective attack than the thrust, he was equally adamant that at times in a fight circumstances would occur where a cut would be the only available attack and others where the thrust would be the logical course to pursue. Silver felt that to be an effective swordsman a fighter needed to know when and how to use either of these options as the opportunity arose during a fight at the appropriate moment. Additionally, in many of

the techniques described in his “Brief Instructions”, Silver used a good many thrusts, especially as a final action in a sequence of actions.

In the language of George Silvers time, the main principles of his fight have been named “Grounds”. This term is akin to the term “proofs” in modern geometry. Silver was concerned that when discussing or teaching, the truth of each “Ground” had to be established otherwise the student’s understanding or performance of the technique would not be “true”.

The Fours Grounds:

1. **Judgment** – The ability to place yourself at an advantageous distance from your opponent. Awareness of all possible offensive and defensive actions which would be possible from that distance by observing your opponents wards and actions.
2. **Distance** – The space between you and your opponent.
3. **Time** – A relative measure of how long it takes to perform an action.
4. **True Place** – A position from which a swordsman may strike an opponent without danger of being struck himself.

(George silver, Paradoxes of Defence, 1599, James L. Jackson, Three Elizabethan Fencing Manuals, 2001, p. 524)

In practice the use of Judgement allows you to maintain the most advantageous Distance. Knowing what is possible for you or your opponent at this Distance allows for an appropriately Timed action. Time available due to Distance and your opponent’s action allow the achievement of Place.

In George Silver’s terminology, the “True Place” is a position from which a swordsman may strike his opponent without danger of being hit himself. If a swordsman attacks he is “Winning Place”, he is moving into striking distance; to a position to strike an opponent from which he can hit without moving his feet. The target, in order to remain safe, must move away from that place to his “True Place”. Whenever a swordsman is attacked he is where his opponent wants him to be. The response to an attack should be to move to somewhere else. The reason the swordsman is able to move to another position and gain the “True Place” is that the “Agent”, or initiator of movement, must close his Distance. The Time required to close the Distance with one or more steps is enough to give the advantage to the defender, also known as the “Patient Agent” or the “Patient”. Thus this example used the principle of “Judgment” to keep “Distance” and “Time” to gain the “True Place”.

The Four Governors:

1. **Judgment** - Knowing when an opponent can reach you and when you can reach them. Knowing what your opponent is capable of doing and how they will do it by observing their stance and guard.

2. **Measure (of time)** - Knowing how to move your weapon and body in order to be able to defend or attack in the available time according to your Judgement.

When discussing Measure, it is necessary to understand its two components; narrow space and true space. Each of these will have a different relation to measure due to the different amounts of time allowed for action. In narrow space, the blade of your opponent will be placed in a position to engage in an attack such as a thrust, which allows for a fast action on their part. The proper counter will be to use a “narrow space” or a closed line with your blade in relation to theirs in order to keep them from taking advantage of the quick movement of the hand. “True space” is the position from which you will have the advantage over your opponent by being able to counter either a blow or thrust. This is achieved by use of your Judgment and countering properly according to what your opponent is capable of doing in the allowable Measure, or time.

3. The third and fourth Governors are known as the “**Twofold**” governors - When pressing an opponent you must be aware of all offensive and defensive possibilities and be prepared to continue the press or to move backwards as the circumstances dictate.

(George silver, *Paradoxes of Defence*, 1599, James L. Jackson, *Three Elizabethan Fencing Manuals*, 2001, p. 524,)

The Four True and False Times:

All movement is done in a space of time. This time is a relative measure of how long it takes to perform an action. Some actions are quicker than others so not all times are equal. In Silvers system, he states that it is not possible to perform two actions in the time that an opponent can perform one. For example, two fast times are never quicker than one slow time.

In an attack, actions are defined in order of the differing body parts movement. The Hand, since it is faster than the body or the feet and carrying the weapon with which you create the threat against your opponent, should always move first, followed by the body and lastly the foot and feet. As stated in Silvers 14th paradox – “whatsoever is done with the hand before the feet is true”.

In Silvers 18th paradox, he enumerates the possible times used in the true fight and in the false fight. “There are eight times whereof four are true and four are false.

The four true times be these:

1. The time of the hand.
2. The time of the hand and body.
3. The time of the hand, body and foot.
4. The time of the hand, body, foot and feet.

The four false times be these:

1. The time of the foot.
2. The time of the foot and the body.
3. The time of the foot, body and the hand.
4. The time of the feet, body, and the hand.”

(George silver, *Paradoxes of Defence*, 1599, James L. Jackson, *Three Elizabethan Fencing Manuals*, 2001, p. 525)

These various times all refer to the actions of the body in order of movement. The time of the hand is movement of the hand and arm alone. Time of the hand and body is movement of the hand followed by movement of the body to gain extra distance. Time of the hand, body and the foot or feet is hand movement first followed by the body and foot or feet in order to gain place on your opponent.

According to Silver, any attack will be made in one of these times.

Attacks involving hand and foot movement must have the attack arrive with the stepping foot. Three reasons for this, listed by Silver are:

1. It allows for the maximum amount of power to be transmitted through the body, and arm into the weapon.
2. This coordination of hand and foot in the attack keeps the attacker maintaining correct balance.
3. The attack landing as the foot lands brings you into the optimal distance to strike your opponent.

This raises a couple of questions:

1. How does an attack initiated with the swift hand, but incorporating the movement of the slow foot get the attack to arrive with the hand and foot simultaneously?

Slowing the hand movement will allow arrival of the attack as the foot lands in place. However, moving the hand first creates a threat before your opponent is in distance. A threat must always be created first in order to remain safe.

2. Doesn't this tie the hand to the foot, slowing the hand to the speed of the foot, thus losing its ability to adjust to circumstances as the fight develops?

A hand that is deliberately slowed can be sped up as necessity dictates. The attack of the slowed hand can be changed or aborted because it is not moving as fast as humanly possible. If an initial foot movement is followed by the movement of the hand, the hand becomes tied to the speed of the foot in order to land at the same time as the foot. It creates a target for your opponent before you have created the threat and your opponent then has the possibility of initiating an attack without danger of being hit. Although an attack in faster times cannot be initiated at greater distances, (the attack with the hand will not land at the same time as the foot or feet), attacks should always be initiated in the greatest possible speed that the distance will allow.

Attacks made in the different times are dependant on distance. The time of the hand or of the hand and body are made "within distance". Attacks using the time of the hand and foot or feet are initiated "out of distance".

Any attacks using only the time of the hand are so swift that Silver states, "The eye is deceived by the swift motion of the hand". Therefore, since all attacks are initiated in differing Times depending on the Distance from which they are initiated and the body movements needed to bring the "Agent" into Distance, Silver preferred to have an opponent at a greater distance. This would force them to commit to an action using a slower Time, thus affording the "Patient" the ability to counter any action by moving to their "True Place".

This brings us to the divisions of distances and their affect on times.

"Within Distance" - Any distance that allows for attacks in the time of the Hand only.

"Second Distance" - Being that of the time of the Hand and Body, or the time of the Hand, Body and Foot or Feet. "Out of Distance" - Any distance where more than two or three steps are needed in order to be "Within Distance". (*Stephan Hand, English Swordsmanship, The True Fight of George Silver, Volume 1 Single Sword, 2006, p. 38*)

It is important to remember that with an action, which is not in Distance or does not bring an opponent into Distance, "false times" can be used without posing a risk to yourself. When you are "Outside of Distance", the principle of "true and false times" has no affect. You must judge the Distance that dictates the application of Time.

Sometimes when defending the feet must be moved before the hand. This at first glance might appear to be a false time, but if the feet are moved before the Agent is within Distance, the principle of "true and false times" will not apply. If, however, the Agent is within Distance, the hand moves first and the principle of "true and false times" will apply. Since the Agent cannot counter the fastest time, that of the hand, with a slower Time, all parries and counterattacks are done in the time of the Hand.

The Four Actions

Silver divides all attacks into four basic components.

1. **Bent** - Any ward or position from which you are ready to attack or defend.
2. **Spent** - The end of an attack when the sword has reached its destination.
3. **Lying Spent** - The fraction of time when you realize an attack is over and you prepare for your next move.

4. **Drawing Back** – The transition from “Lying Spent” to Bent”.

Ideally your movements should flow from movement to movement, or “ward to ward”, in order to avoid lying spent altogether. The practitioner should also be able to launch a new attack or defense out of any of these actions as well. (*George silver, Paradoxes of Defence, 1599, James L. Jackson, Three Elizabethan Fencing Manuals, 2001, p. 503*)

The Four Offensive Actions:

In the principles of Times and Actions, an outline of how an attack should be made is presented to Silvers readers, but not when. “The Four Offensive Actions” are attacks made depending on the different situations which may occur during the course of a fight. When a specific situation arises you can attack using one of these offensive actions depending on the circumstances, remembering to always do so using the principle of the “true times”.

1. **First** – A preemptive attack that your opponent cannot counter in the Time available to him.
2. **Before** – An action “Before”, is not the first action, but one which lands before your opponents final action. An example of this would be if your opponent closes with you using one of the “false times” thereby coming within Distance without first presenting a threat, or an opponent that attacks with a feint that you recognize and counter.
3. **Just** – While “Before” may be either an initial attack or a counterattack, “Just” is always a counterattack. A Just attack must be times to land at the moment your opponent expects their initial attack to land. To be successful, a Just action must negate your opponent’s initial attack. This can be done by moving the initial attack target either out of line or Distance by parrying with a buckler or secondary weapon or, by attacking in opposition, (using your primary weapon to parry while simultaneously striking the opponent). Silver himself discusses the dangers of attacking in opposition, and does not recommend it to a swordsman who has not trained extensively in this particular form of attack.
4. **Afterwards** – An offensive action which is made after the completion of an opponents attack. Afterwards actions take one of two forms. Most commonly a parry followed by a riposte or, if the defender retreats out of Distance or otherwise avoids an attack, then counterattacks while their opponent is “lying spent”.

(*George silver, Paradoxes of Defence, 1599, James L. Jackson, Three Elizabethan Fencing Manuals, 2001, p. 560*)

In this brief examination of George Silvers philosophy of the fight, it is seen that many of the tools used by Silver are ones that were not necessarily new in concept, but were perhaps unique in how Silver classified and presented them in a coherent system. His Governors and Grounds provided the basic tenets of how to fight while his definitions of true and false times, and examination of the times of the hand, body foot and feet went on to explain why and how timing gave you a method to control your opponents options and when coupled with measure and distance gave a distinct advantage over an opponent. In addition, his explanations of actions and offensive actions give a systematic way to look at all possibilities in a fight and their proper use. It is my sincere hope that the information I have gathered here will spark renewed interest in an often overlooked period Fencing Master, and allow you to take this set of tools and examine the fight for both SCA heavy Rapier and cut and Thrust Rapier in a new way that will help develop more efficient and period fighting style than is usually seen in traditional SCA hybrid rapier combat.

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