

School, or Theatre  
By Nicoletto Giganti, Venetian  
1606

Translated by Jeff Vansteenkiste

(rev. 2022-09-12)



## Translator's Introduction

This project began as a fun way to practise my Italian while working with material that was a little less dry than a textbook. With its inclusion of the translated dedication and foreword, it ended up being the only complete translation of Nicoletto Giganti's 1606 work *Scola, overo teatro*.

Aside from being the text my fencing club regularly works with, *Scola, overo teatro* is reasonably short, avoids lengthy discussion of theory, and outside the dedication and foreword is written in very straightforward Italian with the occasional Venetian quirk. In translating it I have tried my best to avoid putting words into Giganti's mouth and have used footnotes where I thought it would be helpful to clarify the text.

This version also includes my translation of the handwritten notes made by a previous owner of a 1628 copy of *Scola, overo teatro* which resides in the Austrian National Library, and reproduces the underlining and other markings. Opposite this copy's title page, someone (presumably our annotator) has written "Di me Tommaso de'gl' Obizzi 1700" ("Tommaso Obizzi's 1700"). The Obizzi were an illustrious but small northern Italian family with French origins, and if 1700 indicates the year he came into possession of the book, it is possible that this is the same Tommaso who would become Marquis of Orciano (today known as Orciano Pisano) in 1702.

I have rendered the annotations which appear in the margins as footnotes, attaching them to the text they refer to where it is clear and roughly on the line of text they were located next to in the original where it is not. They are differentiated from Giganti's text by colour and font. I changed page references to be consistent with the layout of this document and keep them useful. Some of the figures were labelled by hand, and I have inserted these markings as well. I am indebted to Julian Schrattenecker and Florian Fortner, who produced a transcription of these notes in the summer of 2018 which I corrected and completed before translating. You can find their website and other work at <http://www.rapier.at/>.

Jeff Vansteenkiste  
<https://labirinto.ca/>  
2020-04-24

### Notes on the Latest Translation Revision

Over the pandemic lockdowns and the months we could not train in person, my fencing club, Scola della Scherma Storica (<https://schermastori.ca>), held a weekly online reading night. As my translation of Nicoletto Giganti's *Scola, overo teatro* is our main source text, we decided to work through the book chapter by chapter, giving me plenty of opportunities to re-examine my work and correct issues as they came up. At a certain point it became clear that the document had become different enough to make it worth doing a thorough editing pass before releasing it to the community again. Although there were very few substantive changes, the language has been considerably cleaned up, particularly in the foreword's crash course in the early modern philosophy of science.

I hope the reader will find Giganti's work as interesting and useful as we have.

Jeff Vansteenkiste  
<https://labirinto.ca/>  
2022-08-15



## Glossary of Italian Terms

Some Italian words have been left untranslated. These are used in the original text as technical terms, in ways that don't line up neatly with their English translations, or are commonly left untranslated by modern writers on historical fencing. Many of these are never explicitly defined in the text but would have been familiar to anyone involved in fencing at the time it was published. As Giganti's usage of the terms seems completely in line with that of other Italian fencing masters around the same period, I have provided definitions given by other writers where necessary.

### **Debole**

Italian fencing authors of the 17<sup>th</sup> century are of various opinions on how many sections the blade of the sword should be considered to have, dividing it into two (Capo Ferro 1610, 7), three (Marcelli 1686, 35), four (Fabris 1606, 2), and even five parts (Alfieri 1640, 7). Although Giganti does not explicitly give his opinion, he refers only to two: the *debole* (literally “weak”) and the *forte* (literally “strong”). According to Ridolfo Capo Ferro, the *debole* is the half of the sword's blade from its middle to the point (1610, 7).

### **Dritto** (pl. dritti)

See *mandritto*.

### **Forte**

The half of the sword's blade from the hilt to its middle (Capo Ferro 1610, 7).

### **Imbroccata** (pl. imbroccate)

An overhanded thrust (Dall'Agocchie 1572, 8v) which some authors indicate travels at a downward angle (Capo Ferro 1610, 41).

### **Incontro**

Literally an “encounter”. A situation where both fencers attempt to wound each other in the same *tempo* (Alfieri 1640, 18). Giganti only uses the term when this results in both fencers being wounded, i.e., a double hit.

### **Inquartata** (pl. inquartate)

A type of attack made in the tempo of the opponent's attack by extending the arm with the sword turned to the inside, holding it in place while pivoting on the lead foot and passing to the outside with the rear. Giganti also refers to this action as a “slip”.

**Mandritto** (pl. mandritti)

A cut thrown from your right side toward the enemy's left side (Fabris 1606, 26).

**Quarta**

Literally “fourth”. In the numbered guard system used by some of Giganti's contemporaries, a guard in which the hand is held supinated, the sword's blade horizontal, its true edge facing toward the fencer's inside (to the left, for a right-handed fencer) and its false to the outside. Sometimes the term is used to refer to the hand position itself. (Fabris 1606, 1-2).

**Riverso** (pl. riversi)

A cut thrown from your left side toward the enemy's right side (Fabris 1606, 26).

**Rotella**

A type of round, curved shield appearing in a number of Italian fencing manuals including Capo Ferro's (1610) and Giacomo di Grassi's (1570), as well as in Giganti's *Libro secondo* (1608).

**Seconda**

Literally “second”. A guard in which the hand is held pronated, the sword's blade horizontal, its true edge toward the fencer's outside and its false edge to the inside. Sometimes the term is used to refer to the hand position itself. (Fabris 1606, 1-2).

**Stoccata** (pl. stoccate)

An underhand thrust (Dall'Agocchie 1572, 8v).

**Targa**

A type of small, square shield appearing in several Italian fencing manuals including Achille Marozzo's (1536) and Giganti's *Libro secondo* (1608).

**Terza**

Literally “third”. A guard in which the hand is held in a neutral position, the sword's true edge straight down and its false edge straight up. Sometimes the term is used to refer to the hand position itself (Fabris 1606, 1-2).

**Tempo** (pl. tempi)

In his chapter TEMPO AND MEASURE, Giganti explains that a *tempo* is an opportunity to wound the enemy without being wounded in turn. However, he often uses the term to mean a discrete interval of time or motion, e.g., “you must do three things in one *tempo*” or “immediately in the same *tempo* return backward outside of measure”.

**Vita**

Although the word *vita* can mean “life” or “body”, Giganti typically uses it to refer to the band of the body above the hips at the waist, i.e., your core.



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*Tommaso Obizzi's*  
*1700*

# SCOLA, OVERO T E A T R O.

Nelquale sono rappresentate diuerse maniere, e modi di parare,  
ed di ferire di Spada sola, e di Spada, e Pugnale;

*Doue ogni studiofo potrà eſercitarsi, & farſi pratico nella professione dell' Armi,*

DI NICOLETTO GIGANTI VINITIANO,  
AL SERENISS. D. COSMO DE' MEDICI  
GRAN PRINCIPE DI TOSCANA.

*Con licenza de' Superiori, & Priuilegio.*



I N V E N E T I A,

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Appreſſo Gio. Antonio, & Giacomo de Franceſchi. M D C VI.

*Title Page*



# SCHOOL, OR THEATRE

In which different manners and methods of parrying and wounding with the single sword and sword and dagger are represented

*Where every scholar will be able to exercise and become practised in the profession of arms*

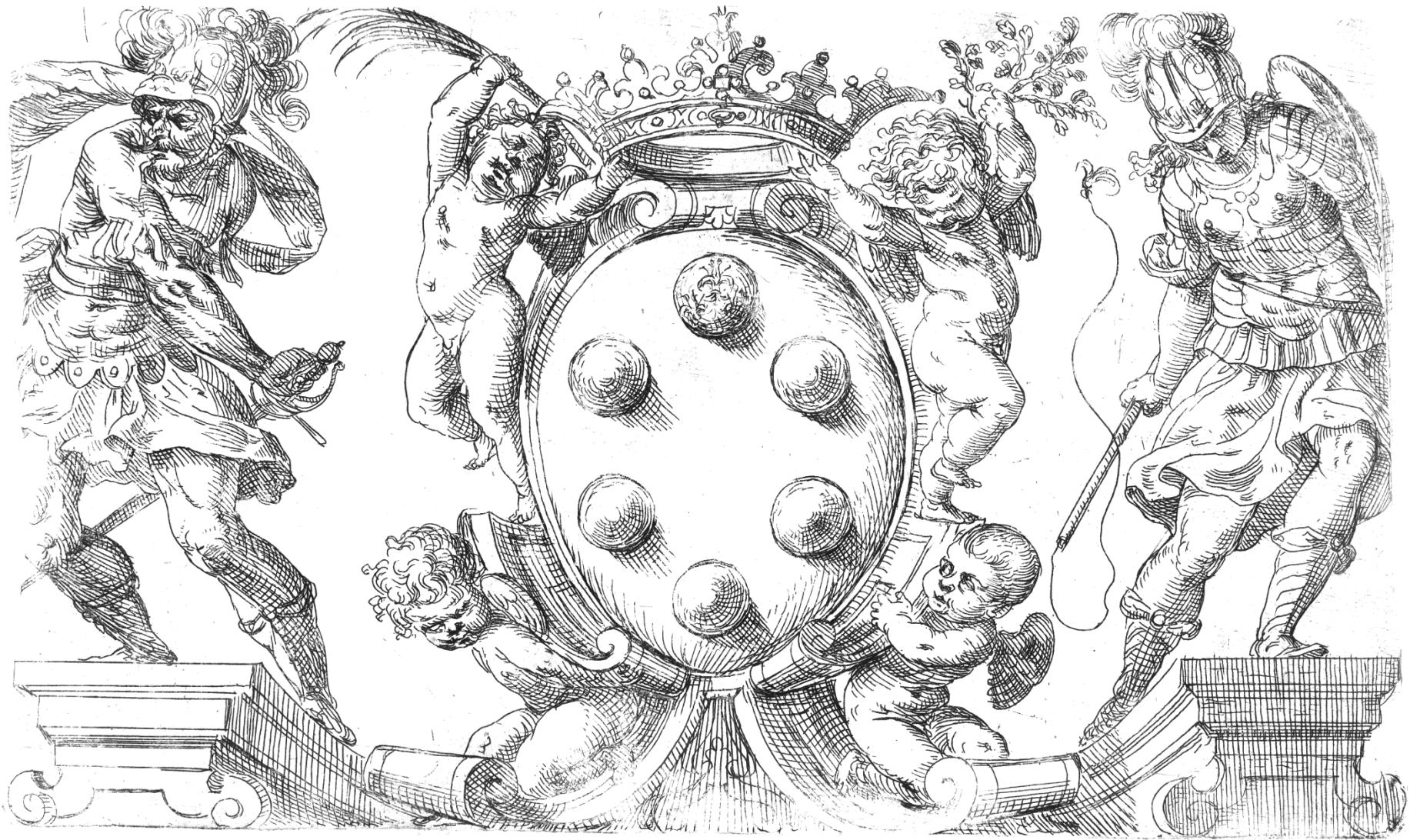
BY NICOLETTO GIGANTI, VENETIAN

TO THE MOST SERENE DON COSIMO DE' MEDICI  
GREAT PRINCE OF TUSCANY

*With license and privilege of the Superiors*

IN VENICE

Printed by Giovanni Antonio and Giacomo de Frenchesi. MDCVI



*Arms of the Medici family*

TO THE MOST SERENE  
**DON COSIMO DE MEDICI**  
GREAT PRINCE OF TUSCANY  
my only Lord

Just as iron extracted from the rough mines would be useless had it not received shape suited to human armies from industrious art, thus the same in the hands of the strong soldier can be of little profit if, accompanied by studious and wise valour, the way is not made clear for every difficult and triumphant success. In this way to a point, since the Good Shepherd welcomes the operation, and because almost all the noblest things proceeding from our actions receive appropriate material from His hands which, refined and dignified by the industry of the spirit, achieve miraculous and powerful effects. I am stunned to silence now that this tempering is wonderfully displayed in the excellence and illustrious greatness of Your Most Serene Highness. You retain the natural greatness returned to its peak from the invincible glorious works of Your ancestors, not only in the ancient and royal histories, but reflecting all the light of the present and past splendour in yourself, adorning them with your own virtues so that everyone admires that most divine temper, and with wonderment says that such a Most Serene Lord is no less fitting to that Most Serene State than such a Most Serene State to that Most Serene Lord. However, I will merely say that just as this proposition is demonstrated clearly in all the arts, so it is perceived evidently in exercising arms. Discussing the strength of steel, even if it is employed by a strong arm and agile body, if it is not conferred with observed rules and exercised study, it is shown to be perilous and of little valour, whereas if the art can be recognized as a wise captain and obeyed as a bold minister, they make marvelous prowess of it. Your testament serves as a clear example to us in which Heaven, needing to grant every level of perfect quality, as in the most complete illumination of the present age, has in the noblest proportion of stature, puissance, and vigour joined agility, promptness, and strength in order to draw with its highest ingenuity the finesse of industry, advice, time, and art that is able to make a Most Complete and Illustrious Captain a Most Serene and Singular Prince.

Wherefore I, recognizing and admiring with humblest affection the mature splendour of Your young and happy years, and reading in the face of the world the secure hopes and fruits of the future age, adoring that hand from which Italy and the entire world is taking safe rest and glorious protection, to that I offer and consecrate with humble dedication this small, I will certainly not say fruit, but work, of my labours, that will, therefore, have to please You, being on a subject You enjoy. In that, it will be dignified to bend Your Most Serene eye in order that many of your highest rays pass over where the baseness of my ingenuity with the exercise of this art that I have dealt with for twenty-seven years does not arrive. Let this work, humble in of itself, present itself happily to

the view of the World. It will be effected with the action of my devotion, together with the fruit of your Most Serene mercy, who serving being the full glory, I pray that Heaven makes me a worthy, even lowest servant. In Venice February 10, 1606

Of Your Most Serene Highness

A most humble and devoted servant

Nicoletto Giganti, Master of Arms

# TO THE LORD READERS,

## ALMORO LOMBARDO

Son of the Most Renowned Lord Marco.

Desiring to write on the subject of arms, although the author does not mention that it is a science, to me it appears a necessary thing, Lord Readers, to treat with what share it has, and of which name it should be adorned so that everyone knows its greatness, dignity, and privilege.

Thus, before any scholar of this most noble science reads and discusses the most learned and easy observations of the valorous and knowledgeable expert, Nicoletto Giganti, in order to observe the rule and general precept of a person who wants to address anything, I will come to the definition and then to the general division of this word “science”. From these two things it will finally be recognized by everyone that this beautiful profession shows us it is a science.

Science, therefore, is a certain and manifest knowledge of things that the intellect acquires. It is of two sorts—that is, speculative and practical. Speculative is a simple operation of the intellect around its appropriate object. Practical only consists in actual workings of the intellect.

Speculative is divided in two parts—that is, in real speculative and rational speculative. Real aims at the reality of its object, which shows its essence on its exterior. Rational consists in those things that only the intellect administers and does not extend itself further to other goals.

Physics is a real speculative science that only aims at moving and natural things, like the elements. Mathematics is a real speculative science that only extends as far as the continuous and the discrete—continuous such as lines, circles, surfaces—the measures of which arithmetic deals with.

Grammar, rhetoric, poetry, and logic are rational speculative sciences.

Practical science is further divided in two: active and productive. Ethics, politics, and economics are active. Productive can be separated into seven others, called mechanical, which are woolcraft, agriculture, soldiery, navigation, medicine, hunting, and metalworking.

Now, in order to come to what I promised above about this noble science, I will go over its qualities and nature, discussing whether it is speculative or practical science. I say that, in my opinion, it is speculative, and prove it with diverse reasons. There is no doubt

that it is science because it is not acquired if not through the operation of the intellect, from which it springs. That it is speculative is certain, as it does not consist in more than the simple knowledge of its object, as I will further demonstrate below.

The object of this science is nothing more than parrying and wounding. The knowledge of those two things is a work of the intellect, and experts of this science do not with intelligence extend it further than the knowledge of them. They cannot be understood at all unless one first has knowledge of tempi and measures, nor feints, disengages, or resolutions without knowledge of tempi and measures. These are all operations of the intellect. Moreover, the intellect does not reach beyond this understanding because, as I have said, the aim of this profession is understanding parrying and wounding. We will see whether it is real speculative or rational speculative science, however.

Thinking on this, it cannot be rational, and the reason is this: Even though it is an operation of the intellect, it nevertheless extends further, wherefore I find it to be real speculative science. Real, because the knowledge of its aim is shown to us outwardly by the intellect, since the understanding of wounding and parrying, along with tempi, measures, feints, disengages, and resolutions, despite being operations of the intellect, cannot be understood if outwardly. This outward expression consists in the bearing of the body and sword in the guards and counterguards, which all consist of circles, angles, lines, surfaces, measures, and of numbers. These things, which must be observed, can be read about in Camillo Agrippa and in many other experts of this science. Note that, just as those operations of the intellect without an exterior operation cannot be shown, so these exterior operations cannot be understood without the prior operations of the intellect, in a way that this science, which derives from the intellect, cannot be understood if not outwardly. Neither can it be outwardly understood without operations of the intellect. These operations seek to understand the greatness, excellence, and perfection of this profession, and will always be seen united. As there will never be sun without day, nor day without sun, never will there be those without these, nor these without those. In the end we see that it is real speculative science.

This science of the sword, or of arms, is a real speculative mathematical science—of geometry, and arithmetic. Of geometry because it consists in lines, circles, angles, surfaces, and measures, and of arithmetic because it consists in numbers. There is no motion of the body that does not produce an angle or constraint, no motion of the sword that does not travel in a line, no guard or counterguard that does not proceed by number. The observations of these things all depend on knowledge of tempi and measures, whence I conclude that this most noble science is speculative real mathematical—of geometry and arithmetic—as I said a little above.

Perhaps some inquisitive person arguing over this could say that the science of arms is a practical science with this reason: Practical science being a science that extends not only to the knowledge of its own object but to its operation, and the science of the sword being a science that applies not just to the knowledge of, but the operation of it, this science is therefore practical and not

speculative. To this objection I respond: All things have some operation from nature. Our operations are of three sorts: Some are internal, and these exist in pure and simple intellect and derive from a rational speculative science. Some are internal and external, and these have a commonality inside and outside the intellect and arise from a real speculative science. Some are completely external, and these exist entirely outside the intellect and depend on a practical science. They are either active or productive. Speculative productive real science is no different from practical science other than in this: Real speculative science, even though it operates outwardly in its object, it nevertheless furnishes the understanding of that in the intellect. Practical science not only cannot operate on its object if not outwardly, but also cannot even come to understand it if not outwardly. The science of arms obtains the knowledge of its object in the intellect and, even though it operates outwardly, cannot be said to be practical science. Rather, it is speculative real science.

We have therefore seen that it is a science and that it is mathematics—of geometry and arithmetic—since it consists in numbers, lines, and measures. The author does not make mention of this in his observations so that learned persons and those with no study may acquire some profit from him. From these figures and his renowned lessons, therefore, without learning to understand the multiplicity of lines, circles, angles, and surfaces which would instead confuse the mind of the reader that does not understand these studies, giving him no instruction, everyone will without doubt or effort learn to understand tempi, measures, resolutions, feints, disengages, and the method of parrying and wounding.

As for learning circles, lines, and other things mentioned above, every studious person will come to understand them with practice. I will always advise everyone to apply himself to the study of letters before this profession, because someone who has studied to understand the necessary things around this science will better profit and become more excellent and perfect, greatly reducing his time to acquire the understanding of the aforesaid things: guards and counterguards, subtle and obvious. He who has not studied will not achieve so easily and, even though he can learn, will not acquire the understanding of this science without length of time and continuous exercise.

How great is the dignity and esteem of this profession? What decorum does it seek? What reputation, and how much honour is it due? Under what obligation is someone who carries the sword and makes a profession of it? I say its dignity and consideration entirely derive from its qualities, by the division of which they can be understood.

This science of the sword is separated into three parts, and the first is divided in two: natural and artificial. Natural is a demonstrative discourse man makes use of naturally in parrying and wounding, since he proceeds with those goals extracting what mother nature administers to him for his needs with his own ingenuity. This is what many men of courage and spirit have shown great measure of in their contentions with men of great art and knowledge. The artificial is that which with ingenuity and long use and practice finds different manners of parrying and wounding using the above noted things, encompassed by short rules and

extraordinary methods. Accordingly, coming to some occasion, a man extracts the proper terms of safety from this. In his lessons, the author shows great understanding of those two qualities and the reader will be fully satisfied with them.

The second part is this: The artificial science of the sword is divided in two: demonstrative and practised. Demonstrative is that which shows the proper method and term of parrying and wounding, firm-footed just as with the pass, when one must bind the enemy, and when one must draw back by way of those lines, circles, or circumstances you remember from above, through which the intellect governs and imparts the various and multiple postures and counterpostures of the body. Practised is the same demonstrative which, now that we have acquired it, we apply to the understanding of a thousand warnings. There is no difference between them except that demonstrative is self-contained and practised serves the understanding of various things.

The third part is this: The demonstrative science of the sword is divided in two: the first demonstrative consists of uncomplex terms—that is, simple terms—or composite, which combine multiple demonstrative terms of various circumstances, such as being outside of measure, with the arms open, the weapons high or low. These are called uncomplex terms—that is, terms not understood by the enemy. They are called simple because they are natural. They are called composite because they contain many considerations. These are divided into first and second concepts.

First concepts are real things that are first grasped by the intellect, like parrying and wounding, and these function in first intention. Second concepts are formed by the intellect, and they produce our second intention, knowledge, in order to be capable of wounding and parrying. These are produced by means of the first, for as soon as our intellect has learned this aim of wounding and parrying, it immediately reasons out how it can be done in different manners and with different methods.

The second demonstrative consists in complex terms—that is, terms that combine multiple demonstrative terms—and these terms, either united at measure or separate at a distance, demonstrate their purpose, like how being in guard with the weapons closed demonstrates, either at a distance or at measure of the body's posture (or counterposture, which is the point of that), how many things can be done with that. For this reason, it is seen how highly regarded this beautiful science is for its qualities and the terms it contains.

And so, this is of great dignity because it is real speculative mathematics—of geometry and arithmetic—and for the many qualities it is found to contain. Thus, I say that it requires decorum and reputation matching its own. It is also to be considered, o Readers, that this science is predominantly found in royal courts and with every prince, studied in the most famous cities by barons, counts, knights, and persons of great quality. This is for no other reason than because, just as it is noble, it excites and inflames our spirits to great things, to heroic feats and actions to measure up to the virtue of the spirit, the valour of the body, the vigour, the strength, and the skill of the person. It always requires an equal match and allows no impugnement of them. It wants to be understood and



learned, but not professed, not taken up for every folly. It avoids the disputes of villainous persons. It does not do all that it can but shows itself at the time and place. It shirks the practices of excess and is of few words. It desires a serious comportment, an alert eye, an honoured dress, and a noble practice. This is enough about its decorum and reputation. In regard to the honour it is due, it is to be noted that the observance of all said things is an honour to this profession. It remains only to say what obligation someone who carries the sword is under.

We will pass over the terms of these “duellists” who, along with having badly understood said profession, I say that with many of their propositions they also degrade it and have reduced it to such an unhappy state that it not only casts aside the virtuous life, human discourse, and every reason that such a science demands but, forgetting the great God, and themselves as a consequence, their unjust aims only possess it for the damnation of their spirits, abandoning the divine church for their diabolical thoughts.

This profession, o Readers, places someone who practises it the under obligation to understand that it desires to be used in four occasions: The first for faith, then for country, for defence of one’s own life, and finally for honour. It always wishes to be a champion of reason, never taken hold of in order to do wrong, and someone who does so injures this profession. Neither will a man of honour ever have held onto a wrong in order to fight but will only do so for the said things. It is necessary to have occasion because fighting without one is a thing of the foolish and drunk. Some, as soon as they have acquired some beginning of this, are wont to put the sword at their side and, using a thousand insolences, detain, wound, or sometimes kill some miserable person, believing themselves to have acquired honour and fame. They do evil because, more than harming the nobility of this, which must not be employed without reason, they offend the just God and themselves.

In order not to become tedious I will not continue, but only exhort each person to study such a noble and real science, beseeching him to heed the underwritten observations of our noble expert and to practise them, because with a short period of time no small profit will be acquired, observing how much this befits his own honour, glory, and greatness.

# COPY

The underwritten Most Excellent Lord Captains of the most Illustrious Council of Ten have belief from the Lord Reformers of the Studio of Padua through the report of the two elected for such, that is, of the Reverend Father Inquisitor and of the Secretary of the Senate Zuane Maravegia, with oath, that in this book titled School, or Theatre by Nicoletto Giganti, Venetian, nothing contrary to the law is found, it is worthy of print, and they grant it licence to be printed in this city.

Dated the 31st of October, 1605.

D. Santo Balbi	}	Captains of the Most Illustrious Council of X.
D. Gio. Giacomo Zane		
D. Piero Barbarigo		

Most Illustrious Council of X. Secretary

Barth. Cominus.

October 3, 1605

Registered in the Office Against Blasphemy to the back of paper 135

Giovanni Francesco Pinardo Secretary

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December 23, 1605, in Senate

The power is granted to our faithful Nicoletto Giganti, Venetian, that other than him or someone at his behest, it is not permitted for the space of the next thirty years to venture to print in this city, nor any other city, land, or place of our domain, nor printed elsewhere to conduct or sell in our domain the book composed by him, titled School, or Theatre, under pain of losing the printed or conducted works, which are by the aforesaid Nicoletto Giganti, and being obliged to observe what is required by our law in matters of printing, of paying three hundred ducats: A third to our arsenal, a third to the magistrate that makes the execution, and the other third to the complainant.



*Nicoletto Giganti*

# GUARDS AND COUNTERGUARDS

It is necessary for someone wishing to become an expert on the science of arms to understand many things. To give my lessons a beginning, I will first begin to discuss guards and counterguards, or postures and counterpostures, of the sword. This because, coming to some incident of contention, it is first necessary to understand this to be able to secure oneself against the enemy. |To position oneself in guard, therefore, many things must be observed, as seen in my figures: Standing firm over the feet, which are the base and foundation of the entire body, in a just pace, restrained rather than long in order to be able to extend, holding the sword and dagger strongly in the hands, |the dagger now high, now low, now extended, |the sword now high, now low, now on the right side, in place in order to parry and wound so that the enemy, throwing either a thrust or cut, can be parried and wounded in the same tempo, with the vita disposed and ready because lacking its disposition and readiness it will be an easy thing for the enemy to put it into disorder with a dritto, a riverso, a thrust, or in some other manner, and even if such a person were to parry, they would remain in danger. |It is advised that the dagger should guard the enemy's sword<sup>1</sup> because if the enemy throws, it will parry that, and that the sword should always aim at the uncovered part of the enemy<sup>2</sup> so that he is wounded when throwing. This is all the artifice of this profession. Moreover, it must be noted that all motions of the sword are guards to those who know them, and all guards are good for the practised person, as, on the contrary, no motion is a guard to those who do not understand any, and they are not good for those who do not know how to use them. This profession requires nothing more than science and practice. Practised, it bestows the science. |Placing oneself uncovered in guard is artifice and done so that the enemy disorders himself when throwing and ends up in danger. |Placing oneself covered is also artifice because, binding the enemy, it is possible to wound. In this way, it can be understood that every guard aids those who understand and know, and no guard is valuable to those who do not understand or know. This is enough about guards. |As for counterguards, it is advised that someone who has knowledge of this profession will never position himself in guard but will seek to position himself in a counterguard. |Wanting to do so,<sup>3</sup> know this: One must position oneself outside of measure—that is, at a distance—|with the sword and dagger high, strong with the vita, with a firm and stable pace, |then consider the guard of the enemy. Afterwards, approach him little by little, binding with the sword to be safe—that is, almost resting your sword on his so that it covers it—because he will not be able to wound if he does not disengage the sword. The reason for this is that in disengaging he performs two actions: First, he disengages, which is the first tempo, then wounding, which is the second. While he disengages, he can come to be wounded in many ways in the same tempo before he has time to wound, as will be seen in the figures of my book. |If he changes guard due to the counterguard, it is necessary to follow him with the

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<sup>1</sup> *The dagger should guard ~~the ene~~ the enemy's sword.*

<sup>2</sup> *Always aim your sword at the uncovered part of the enemy.*

<sup>3</sup> *If the guard the enemy stands in can first be seen, then you can place yourself in the counterguard and go to bind him well.*

sword forward, with the dagger alongside always securing his sword, because in the first tempo he will always have to disengage the sword and necessarily ends up wounded. Neither will it ever be possible for him to wound if not with two tempi, and from those parrying will always be a very easy thing. This is enough about guards and counterguards.

# TEMPO AND MEASURE

It is not through knowing how to position oneself in a guard or counterguard, nor how to throw a thrust, an imbroccata, a mandritto, or a riverso, nor how to turn the wrist, nor how to carry the body well, nor how best to control the sword, that a person can be said to know how to parry and wound. | Rather, it is by understanding tempo and measure. Someone who does not understand these, even though he parries and wounds, could not be said to understand how to parry and wound, because such a person can err and incur a thousand dangers in parrying as in wounding.<sup>4</sup> Having therefore discussed guards and counterguards, it remains to discuss tempo and measure in order to then know how to accommodate a recognition of when one must parry and wound. | Measure, then, means when the sword can reach the enemy. When it cannot, it is called being out of measure.<sup>5</sup> | Tempo is recognized in this way:<sup>6</sup> If the enemy is in guard, one needs to position oneself outside of measure and advance with one's guard, securing oneself from the enemy's sword with one's own, | and put one's mind on what he wishes to do. | If he disengages, in the disengagement he can be wounded, and this is a tempo. | If he changes guard, while he changes is a tempo. | If he turns, it is a tempo. | If he binds to come to measure, while he walks before he arrives at measure is a tempo to wound him. | If he throws, parrying and wounding in one tempo is also a tempo. | If the enemy stands still in guard in order to wait and you advance to bind him and throw where he is uncovered when you are at measure, it is a tempo. | This is because in every motion of the dagger, sword, foot, and vita, such as changing guard, is a tempo | in the way that all these things are tempi—because they contain different intervals. While the enemy makes one of these motions, he will certainly be wounded<sup>7</sup> | because while one moves one cannot wound. It is necessary to learn this in order to be able to wound and parry. I will be demonstrating more clearly how one must do so in my figures.

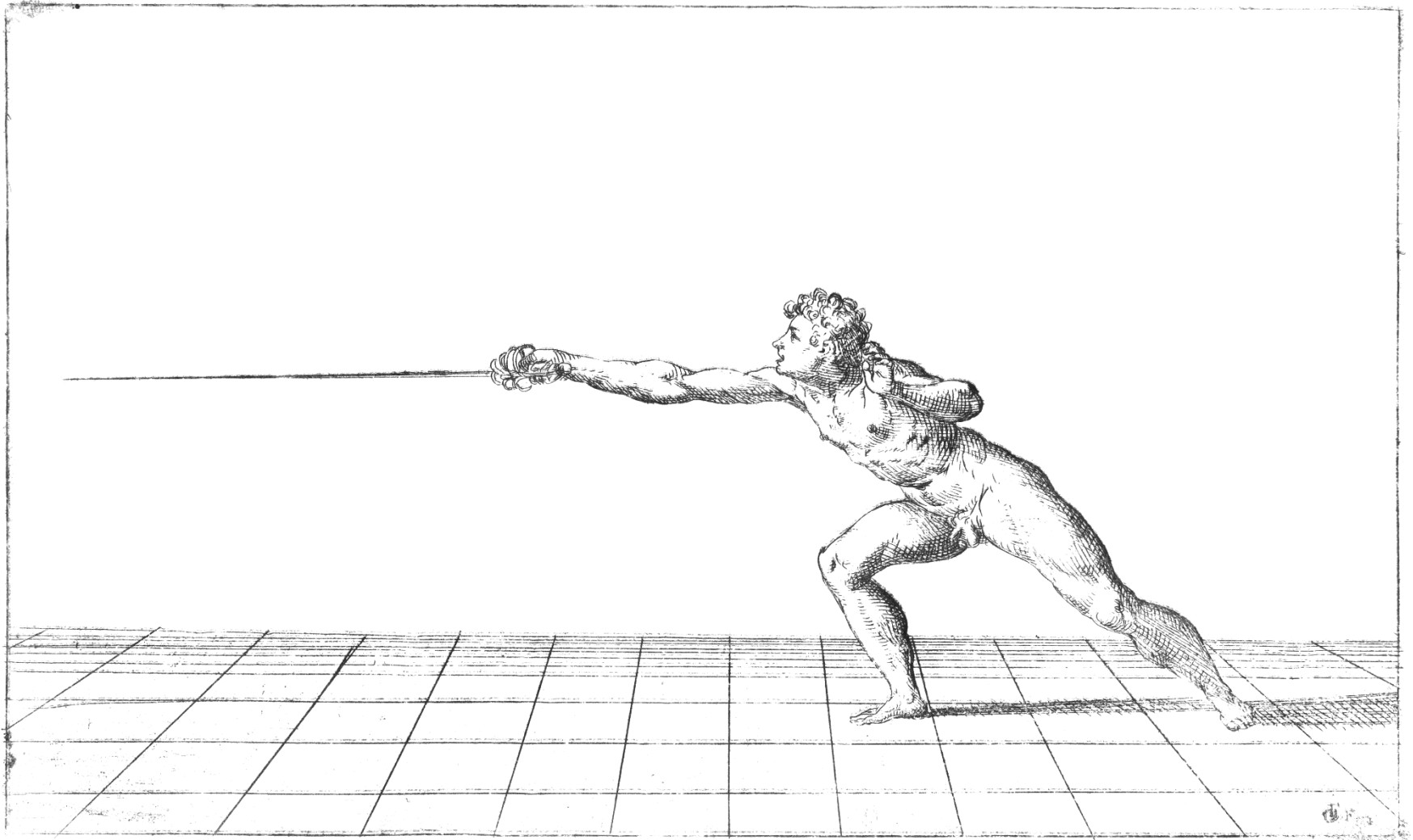
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<sup>4</sup> *Someone who does not know how to avail themselves of tempo and measure cannot be said to understand parrying or wounding.*

<sup>5</sup> *What measure is, and being inside or outside measure.*

<sup>6</sup> *What tempo is.*

<sup>7</sup> *When the enemy cannot wound you due to being occupied in other motions.*



*Figure 1*



### *The method of throwing the stoccata*

Now that we have discussed guards, counterguards, measures, and tempi, it is necessary to demonstrate and make understood how one must carry the vita in order to throw a stoccata and escape, since, wishing to learn this art, it is first necessary to know how to carry the vita and throw long stoccate, as seen in this figure. All lies in throwing long, brief, strong, and immediate stoccate, withdrawing backward outside of measure. To throw the long stoccata, one must position oneself in a just and strong pace, short rather than long in order to be able to extend and, in throwing the stoccata, stretch the sword arm, bending the knee as much as possible. |The proper method of throwing the stoccata<sup>8</sup> is, after being positioned in guard, it is necessary to throw the arm first, then extend forward with the vita in one tempo so that the stoccata arrives and the enemy does not perceive it. If the vita were brought forward first, the enemy could notice it and, availing himself of the tempo, be able to parry and wound in one tempo. |In withdrawing backward,<sup>9</sup> one must first bring back the head, since behind the head will follow the vita, and afterwards the foot. Bringing the foot back first and leaving the head and vita forward keeps them in great danger. |Therefore, to learn this art well, one must first practise throwing this stoccata. Knowing this, the rest will be learned easily, and not knowing it, the contrary. Be advised, Lord Readers, that in my lessons I will place this method of throwing the stoccata many times where appropriate. This I know makes the lessons better understood. It is not said of me that I say one thing many times.

### *Why begin with the single sword*

In this, my first book of arms, I intended to discuss only two kinds of weapons—that is, the single sword and the sword and dagger—setting aside discussion of some others. If it pleases the Lord, I will publish on all sorts of weapons as soon as possible. Because the sword is the most common and frequently used weapon of all, I wanted to begin with it, since one who understands playing with the sword well will also know a little of how to handle every other kind of weapon.<sup>10</sup> Since it is not customary in every part of the world to carry the dagger, targa, or rotella, and as fighting with the single sword often occurs, I urge everyone to learn to play with the single sword first, in spite of everything that one might have in frays, such as the dagger, targa, or rotella, since occurring, as it many times does, that the dagger, targa, or rotella falls from his hand, it would be possible for a man to defend himself and wound the enemy with the single sword, and because one who is practised in playing with the single sword will know how to parry and wound just as well as if he had sword and dagger.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *How one must move in throwing the long stoccata.*

<sup>9</sup> *How one withdraws quickly.*

<sup>10</sup> *Someone who knows how to play with the single sword will know a little bit about taking up every other weapon.*

<sup>11</sup> *Someone who plays well with the single sword will know how to wound and parry as if he had a sword and dagger.*

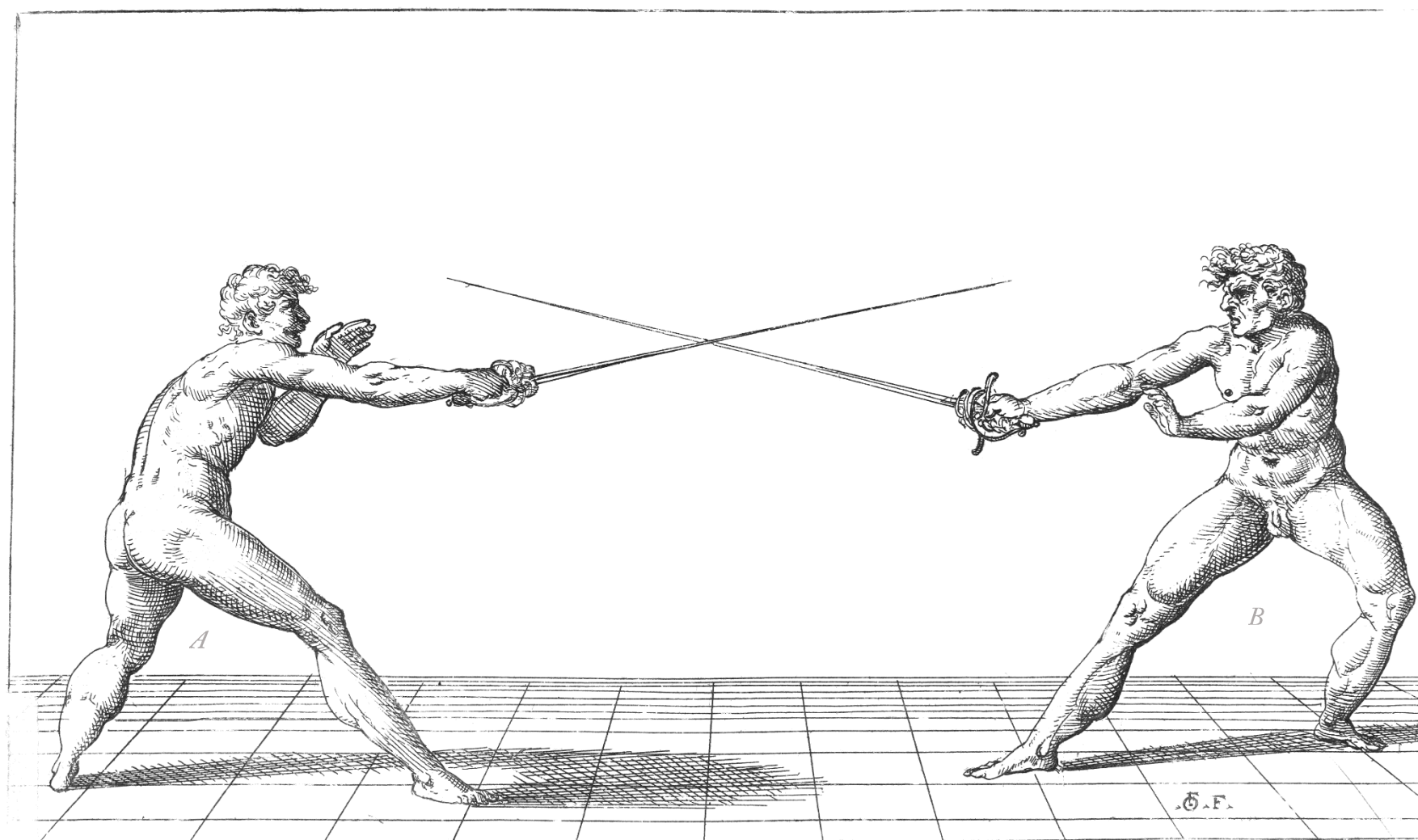


Figure 2<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Guard that goes to bind the enemy on its inside, called by other authors Quarta Guard. A disengages and B wounds him up ahead at page 23 and 24 by turning the wrist from Quarta to Terza.

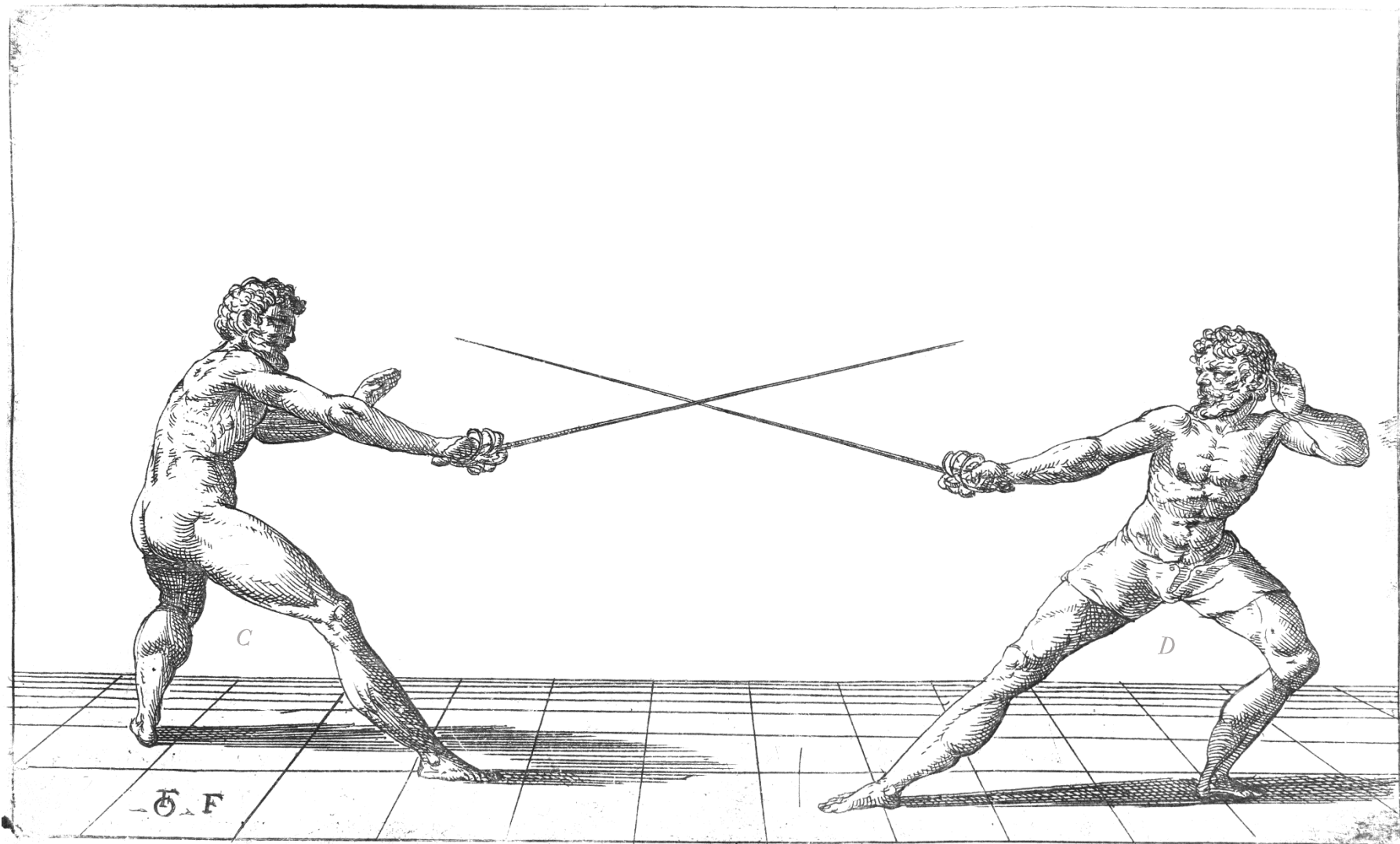


Figure 3<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Guard on the outside, called Guard 3 by other authors, and you will see that at page 25 and 26 A ends up wounded by B.

## GUARDS, OR POSTURES

Many are the guards of the single sword, and many still the counterguards. In my first book I will teach no more than two sorts of guards and counterguards, which you will be able to avail yourself of for all lessons of the figures of this book. |Therefore, before coming to do what you desire, you must go to bind the enemy outside of measure, securing yourself from his sword by placing your sword over his<sup>14</sup> in a way that he cannot wound you if not with two tempi: One will be the disengage of the sword, the other wounding you. You will arrange yourself in this way against all the guards, either high or low, according to how you see your enemy arranged, |always taking care not to give him ease and opportunity to wound you in a single tempo. |You will do this if you take care that the point of his sword is not toward the middle of your vita so that, pushing his sword forward quickly and strongly, he cannot wound you. Therefore, cover the enemy's sword with yours as you see in this figure |so that the enemy's sword is outside of your vita and he cannot wound you if he does not disengage his sword.<sup>15</sup> Arrange yourself with your feet strong, stable with your vita, with your sword arm extended and strong in order to parry and wound, as the figure shows you. If you were to see the enemy in a high or low guard and did not position yourself in a counterguard and secure yourself from his sword, you would be in danger even if your enemy had lesser science and lacked practice compared to you, since you could produce an incontro and both wound each other, or he could put you on the defensive, or rather, in obedience, with feints or disengages of the sword or other things that are possible. If you secure yourself from the enemy's sword as I said above, he will not be able to move or perform any action that you will not perceive and be able to defend from with ease. |These figures here are two guards with the swords forward and two counterguards covering the sword. One is made going to bind the enemy on the inside<sup>16</sup> and the other going outside,<sup>17</sup> as these figures show you and as I will go about showing you in the subsequent lessons.

---

<sup>14</sup> Take care that the enemy cannot wound you in a single tempo. He can't do it if by covering or undermining his sword you make sure his point is not toward your vita.

<sup>15</sup> But in order to wound you he must attempt much by disengaging with the sword and, by his placing two tempi in that, you will be able to prevent it by wounding him while he disengages.

<sup>16</sup> Your standing in quarta guard is called inside.

<sup>17</sup> Outside will be when you arrange yourself in the guard called terza.

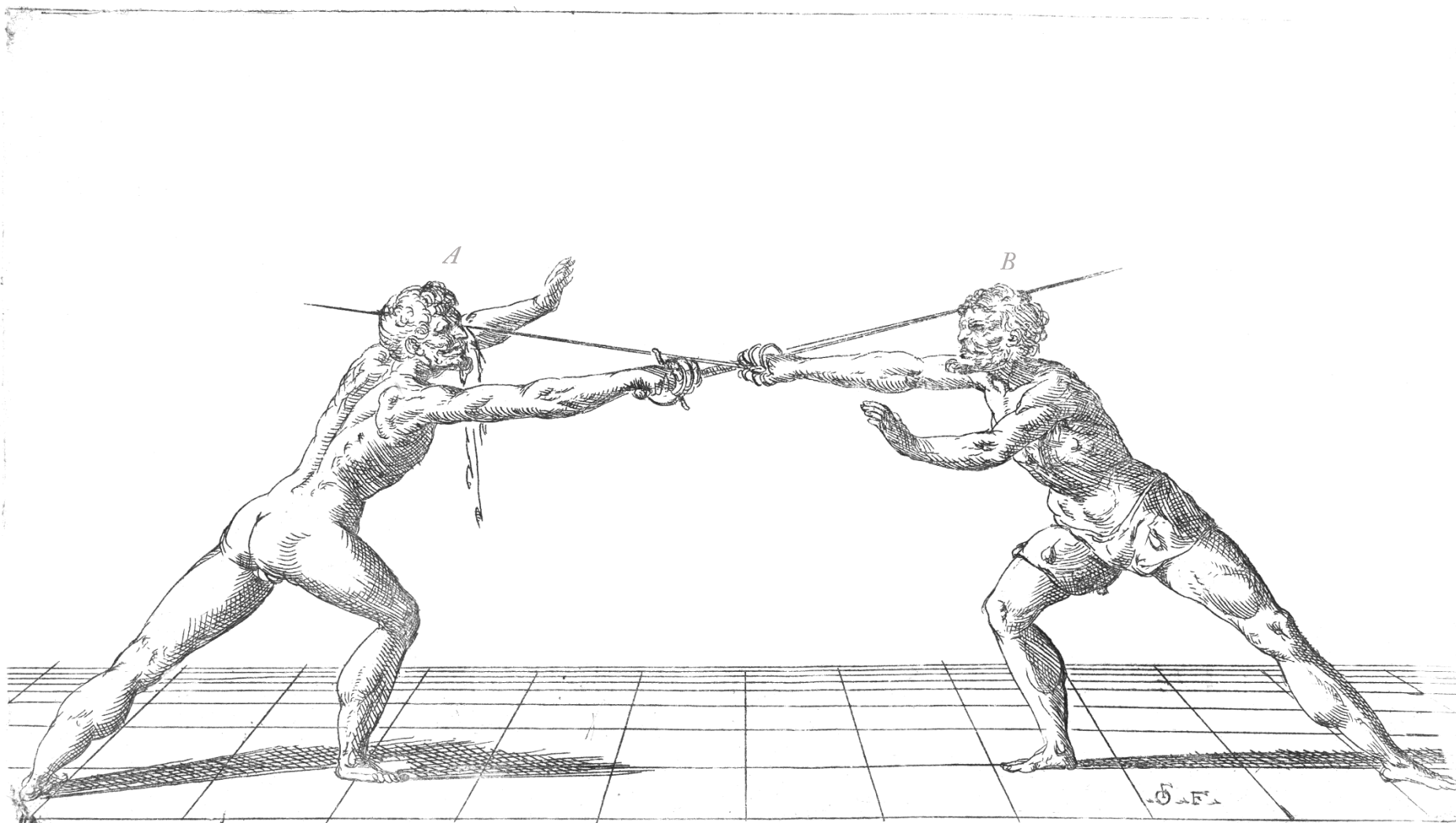



Figure 4<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> A disengages the sword, and in A's disengaging B, turning his wrist to terza, or rather, outside, wounds A.

## EXPLANATION OF WOUNDING IN TEMPO

This figure teaches you how to wound your enemy in the tempo that he disengages his sword. You will do this by approaching to bind the enemy outside of measure,<sup>19</sup> placing your sword over his to the inside as the figure of the first guard shows you<sup>20</sup> so that he will not be able to wound you if he does not disengage the sword. Then, in the same tempo that he disengages to wound you, push forward your sword, turning your wrist<sup>21</sup> in the same tempo, so that you wound him in the face as seen in the figure.<sup>22</sup> In the case that you were to attempt to parry and then wound, it would not be successful, since the enemy would have time to parry and you would be in danger, but if you enter immediately forward with your sword in the tempo that he disengages his, turning your wrist and parrying, the enemy will have difficulty defending himself. This done, the enemy wounded or not, to secure yourself return backward outside of measure with your sword over that of the enemy, never abandoning it.

 In the case that the enemy<sup>23</sup> does not disengage his sword in order to wound you, I want you to advance to bind him inside of measure and immediately throw a thrust at him where he is uncovered, returning backward outside of measure and resting your sword over his.

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<sup>19</sup> *Binding outside of measure means standing away without approaching in order to not be so close that you can be wounded by the swords.*

<sup>20</sup> *Although the plates depicting the guards and counterguards are somewhat less than clear, we know from this chapter that Figure 2 depicts binding the enemy's sword on the inside.*

<sup>21</sup> *Here it says turning the wrist so much it might as well have said "in quarta".*

<sup>22</sup> *That which is observed while the enemy disengages in order to throw at you resolutely in terza, and which is done with just a turn of the wrist in the tempo so that with the extended step you push your hand and wound with a stoccata. This is shown by A at page 20, and here at page 23 he disengaged so that B in terza, who at page 20 was in quarta, now turns to wound A's face in terza.*

<sup>23</sup> *The shown enemy disengages.*



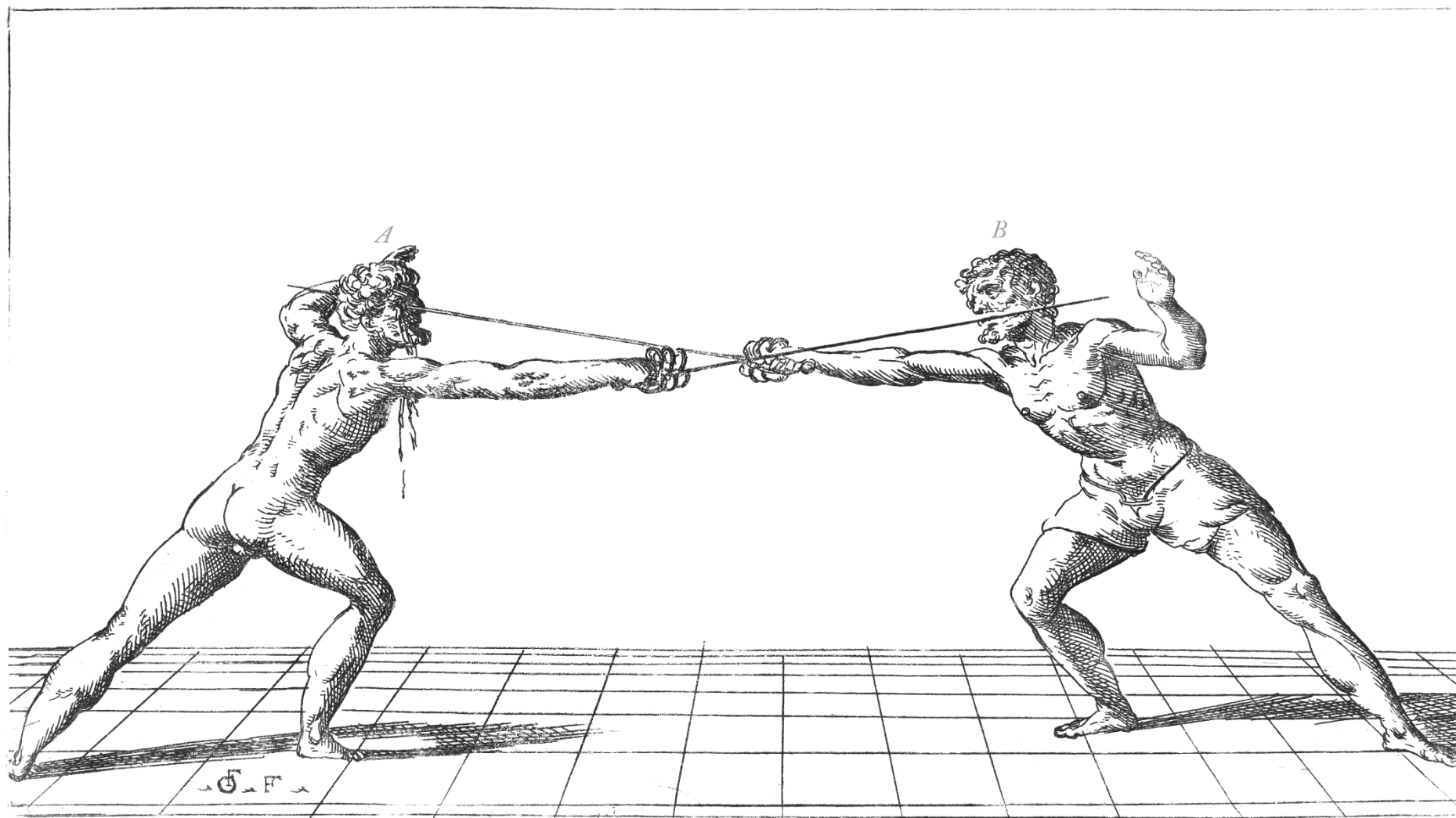


Figure 5<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> A disengages, turning the wrist to terza in quarta, wounds A.

# THE PROPER METHOD OF GOING TO BIND THE ENEMY AND STRIKE HIM

while he disengages the sword

From this figure you learn that if your enemy is in a guard with the sword on the left side, high or low, you approach him to bind him on the outside of his sword<sup>25</sup> from outside of measure, with your sword over his so that it barely touches it, with a just and strong pace, with your sword ready to parry and wound, and with an alert eye, |as you see in the second figure of the guards and counterguards.<sup>26,27</sup> You being arranged in this way,<sup>28</sup> your enemy will not be able to wound you with a thrust if he does not disengage the sword. While he disengages, turn your wrist and in the same tempo throw a stoccata at him as the fourth figure<sup>29</sup> teaches you. Having thrown this stoccata, in the same tempo immediately return backward outside of measure, resting your sword over his so that if he were to attempt to disengage anew, you will throw the same stoccata at him again, turning your wrist as above and returning outside of measure. As many times as he disengages, that many times you will use the same method of turning your wrist and throwing the stoccata at him. |Much practice is required to perform this play well,<sup>30</sup> since from this one learns to parry and wound with great skill and speed. |Take care to always be balanced with your vita and to parry strongly with the forte of your sword because, if your enemy throws strongly at you, parrying strongly will make him disconcerted and you will be able to wound him where he is uncovered. |This must be the first lesson that one learns with the single sword,<sup>31</sup> since all the others that I have placed in this book arise from it.<sup>32</sup> Knowing how to do this in tempo teaches you to parry all the cuts and resolute thrusts that can come for the head, which I will teach hand in hand in the subsequent lessons.

---

<sup>25</sup> *Binding the enemy in terza on the outside, his sword on your left.*

<sup>26</sup> *The two figures are those that you see standing in terza guard at Page 21.*

<sup>27</sup> *Figure 3, which we know from the description of this chapter's action depicts binding the enemy's sword on the outside.*

<sup>28</sup> ~~You~~ *How the enemy cannot wound you if he does not disengage the sword nor, if he disengages, will he ever be able to wound you if you throw at him in the tempo that he does so and are not discouraged, turning your wrist and, that thrown, do not be slow to pull yourself outside of measure.*

<sup>29</sup> *This fourth figure is at Page 25.*

<sup>30</sup>  *Practise those that are important & parry and wound quickly, parry with the forte of your sword.*

<sup>31</sup> *Lesson that the subsequent of the single sword depend on & practise and perform them well.*

<sup>32</sup> *Lessons for understanding what has been said of the wound until now, outside and inside, in quarta and in terza.*



## THE PROPER METHOD OF DISENGAGING THE SWORD

The two figures placed above taught to wound the enemy while he disengages his sword. Because I would not leave a thing in my lessons that is not more than clear, I want to show you the method of disengaging the sword. Note, however, that your enemy being positioned in whichever sort of guard he wants, you having gone to bind him, throw a stoccata at him where he is uncovered and, if he knows as much as you, your swords will always be equal. | I want you then to disengage the sword<sup>33</sup> under the hilt of that of the enemy, quickly turning your wrist and throwing a thrust where you find him uncovered in the same tempo. This is the proper and safe method to disengage the sword and wound in one tempo. | If you were to disengage your sword without turning your wrist,<sup>34</sup> you would give the enemy a tempo and place to wound you, as you will see quite well in practising and trying it yourself. If the enemy were to parry, disengage again in the aforesaid way, always turning your wrist. As many times as he parries, disengage just as many other times in the above way, which is safest, then throw the stoccata at him in the tempo that you disengage. This method of disengaging is no less necessary than what was taught in the explanation of the previous figure on the method of parrying, since this is the main thing required in handling the single sword. Therefore, I exhort everyone to practise these two things well since, being at measure against the enemy, as soon as it is the tempo to disengage the sword, one should know how to disengage quickly and well, and as soon as it is the tempo of parrying, know how to parry similarly well.

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<sup>33</sup> *You disengage and wound.*

<sup>34</sup> *Nor must you avoid ~~disengaging~~ turning the wrist because you can ~~turn~~ end up wounded.*

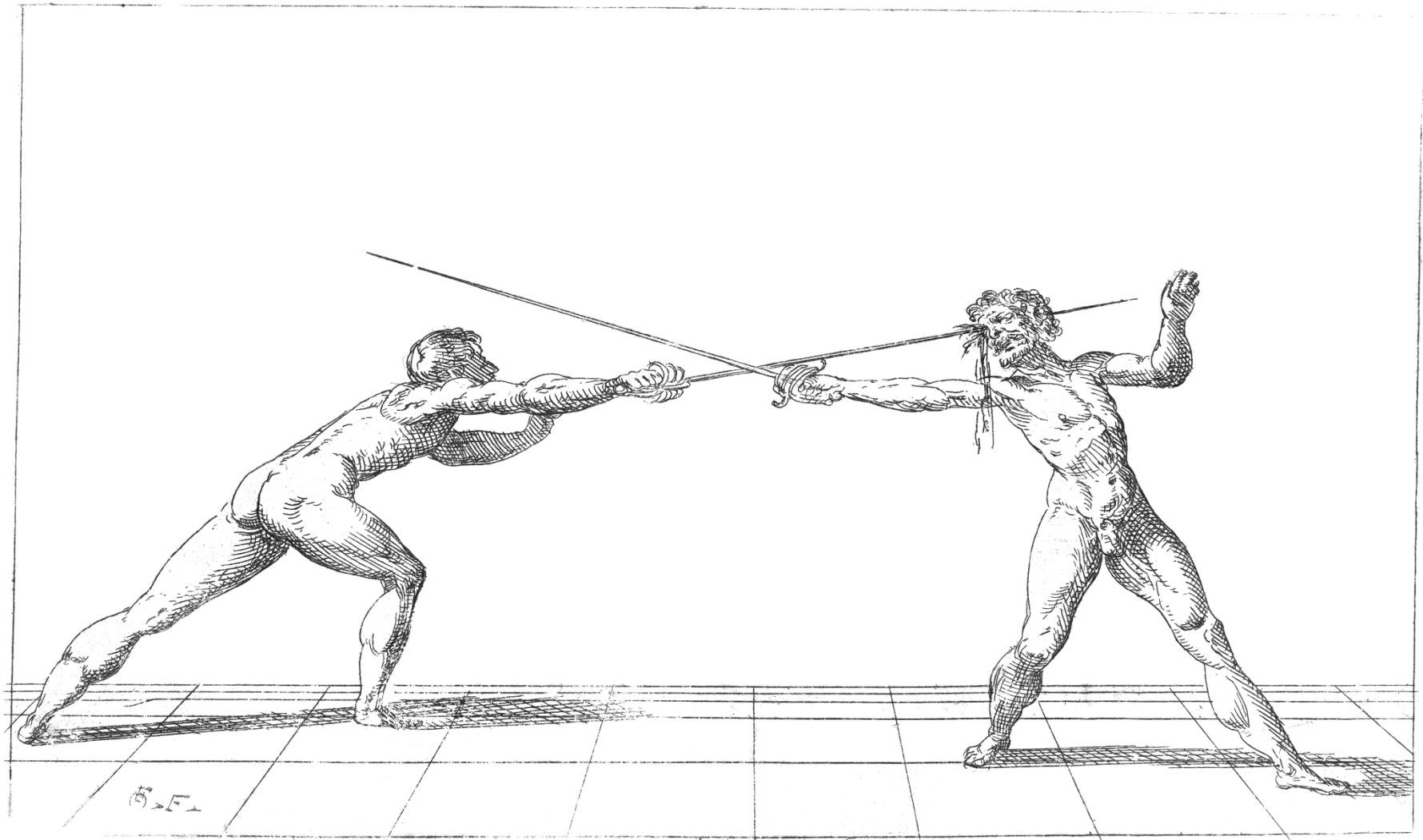


Figure 6

## THE COUNTERDISENGAGE INSIDE<sup>35</sup> OF THE SWORD

In this figure<sup>36</sup> I depict and show you another method of parrying and wounding—by way of counterdisengage. It is done in this way: Having covered your enemy's sword so that if he wishes to wound you, he must disengage, while he disengages, I want you also to disengage so that your sword returns to its first position, covering that of the enemy. But, in disengaging, availing yourself of the tempo, throw a stoccata at him where he is uncovered, turning your vita a little toward the right<sup>37</sup> side and holding your arm stretched forward so that if he comes to wound you, he will wound himself of his own accord. Having thrown the stoccata, return backward outside of measure.

---

<sup>35</sup> *Means: Inside of the sword which means being in quarta and returning to quarta with the counterdisengage.*

<sup>36</sup> Reading the text, Figures 6 and 7 appear to be swapped, meaning this lesson's text refers to Figure 7. Interestingly, the plate order does not appear to be corrected in subsequent printings, even in Jakob de Zeter's German/French version (1619), which uses entirely new plates created by a different artist.

<sup>37</sup> *Throw but also turn your wrist and lean with the vita to the right so that you will be more covered to the inside of your sword and outside the line, distancing yourself from the enemy's point so that it passes far from your vita*

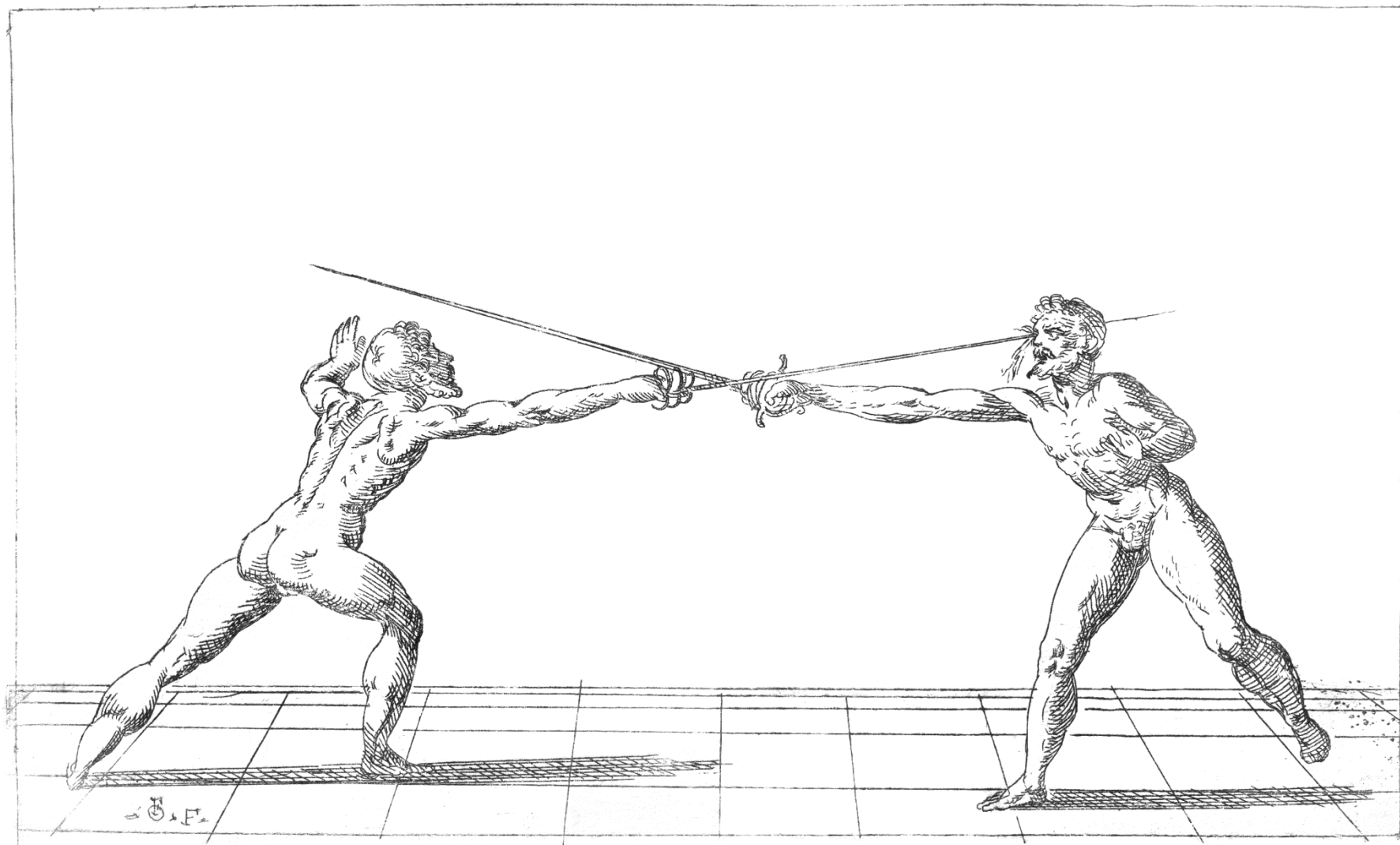


Figure 7

## THE COUNTERDISENGAGE OF THE SWORD ON THE OUTSIDE<sup>38</sup>

This method of wounding<sup>39</sup> by means of an outside counterdisengage is similar to the inside counterdisengage, only there is a difference: Your enemy being in guard and you coming to bind, being outside of measure, you must position yourself in a counterguard, securing yourself from his sword on the outside and making the enemy resolve himself to disengage. While he disengages, you disengage again in the same tempo, turning the point of your sword under his along with your wrist, resting the forte of the edge of your sword and going along its edge, holding your arm long and extended, loosening the vita and lengthening the pace, as seen in the figure, so that you come to wound him without him perceiving it. | Be advised, though, that if the enemy throws the sword strongly,<sup>40</sup> wishing to disengage yours so that the enemy does not reach and wound you, you must hold your vita back in your disengage so that you stay safe. Supposing the enemy had thrown strongly, he would disconcert himself and come to be wounded on your sword and you will stay superior to him, being able to wound him where you see fit, taking care to always hold your sword outside of your vita so that he cannot wound you.

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<sup>38</sup> *Means: outside—that is to say, standing in terza guard, the counterdisengage and wounding is done as taught in the fourth chapter and the figure there shows this.*

<sup>39</sup> This lesson's text refers to Figure 6.

<sup>40</sup> *Means throwing the thrust strongly so that it happens much as the author says here.*

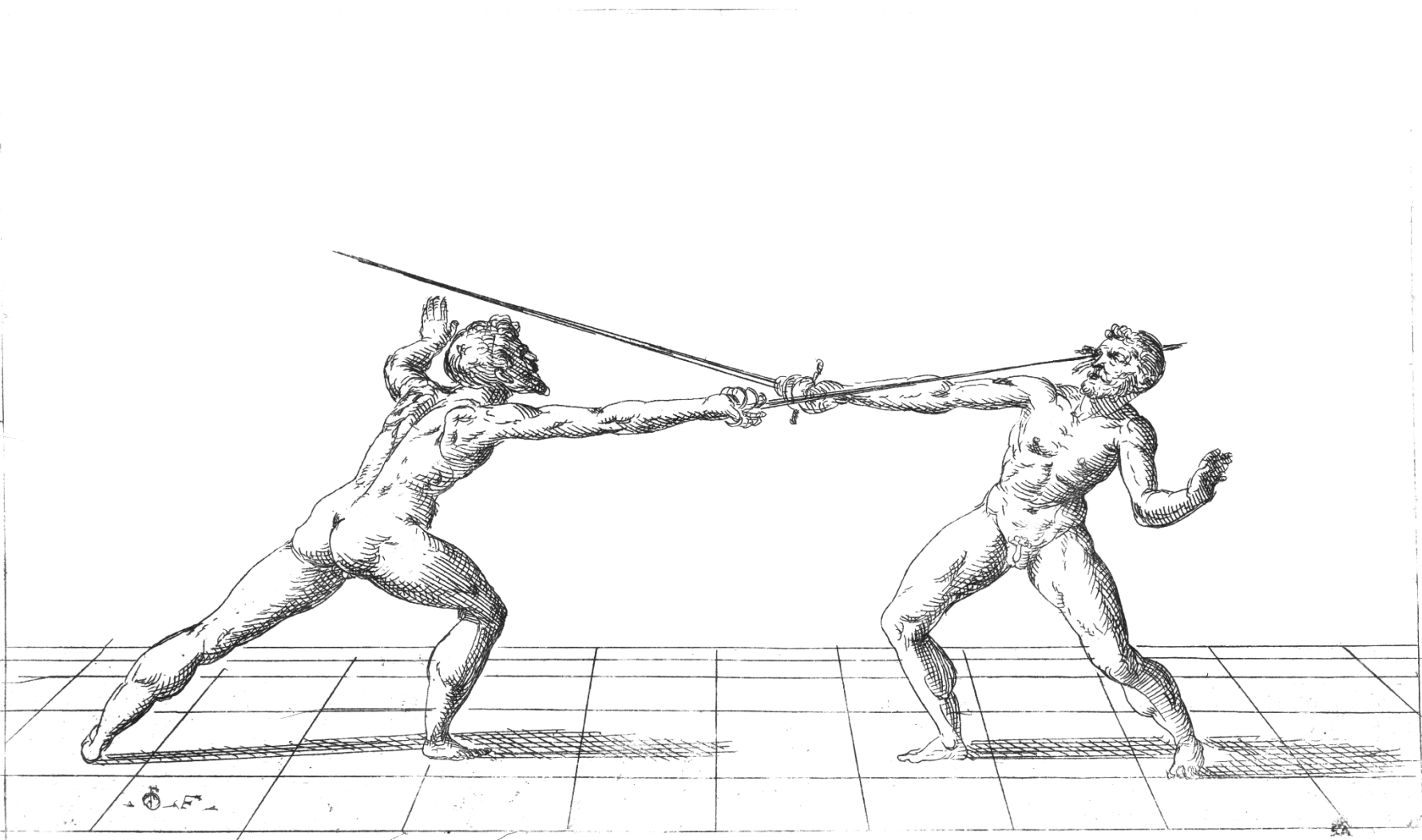


Figure 8

# EXPLANATION OF THE FEINT

## *Making a show of disengaging the sword with your wrist*

The ways of wounding are various and, consequently, my lessons are also various. Do not at all expect me to recount all things that are possible in this profession, however. Those being infinite, my work would be too long and bring tedium to its Readers. However, I will untangle those things that to me appear most beautiful, artificial, and useful, from which arise many others easier and less artificial. Therefore, among all the methods of wounding with artifice, in my opinion the feint exceeds all others. This is nothing more than hinting at doing one thing and doing another. It is done in different ways, and they are these: | I want you to position yourself standing<sup>41</sup> on the right side, with the sword forward and your right arm extended in order to give your enemy occasion to come bind you. As he comes to measure with you, observe whether he wants to wound you from a firm foot or instead with a pass. You will recognize this at the disengage you perform with the sword. Disengage the sword with your wrist and feign throwing a thrust at his face but throw wide of the enemy's sword so that it does not find yours. If the enemy does not parry, throw it resolutely so that you wound him. If he parries, in his parrying redisengage the sword and wound as you see in this figure, where the enemy carelessly wounds himself. In redisengaging, take care that you do not let the sword be found because then your plan would fail, and, in disengaging, bring the head and vita back a little in order to see what the enemy does because if he were to throw and you had not pulled back, he could produce an incontro and you would wound each other. Moreover, you must be advised to run with the right edge of your sword<sup>42</sup> along the edge of the enemy's sword, turning the inside of your wrist upwards in wounding with your sword over the debole of that of the enemy. As soon as the stoccata is given, either resolute or feinted, return backward outside of measure, securing yourself as I showed you above. The feint<sup>43</sup> is therefore performed in this way: First the sword is presented to either the face or chest of the enemy, then the arm is extended without stepping. Whence, if the enemy attempts to parry, you disengage the sword in the same tempo, accompanying it forward with the step so that you wound him unawares. | If he does not attempt to parry, extend the pace and strike him. This is the method of wounding by feint.

---

<sup>41</sup> *How one must proceed in the feints and wounding and & in order to not be wounded.*

<sup>42</sup> *Note: Run along the edge of the debole of the enemy's sword with the edge of your forte.*

<sup>43</sup> *How the feint is performed and how one wounds resolutely and how with the disengage.*

Even though they appear similar, the following two figures are nevertheless different from each other because they contain different methods of feinting. Although they contain almost the same end to their wounding, and it would have sufficed to place a single figure with which to discuss and teach different methods of feinting in order to wound, in order to show clearly the different ways of feinting I wanted to put two of them here that differ widely from each other, which I show you in their explanations.



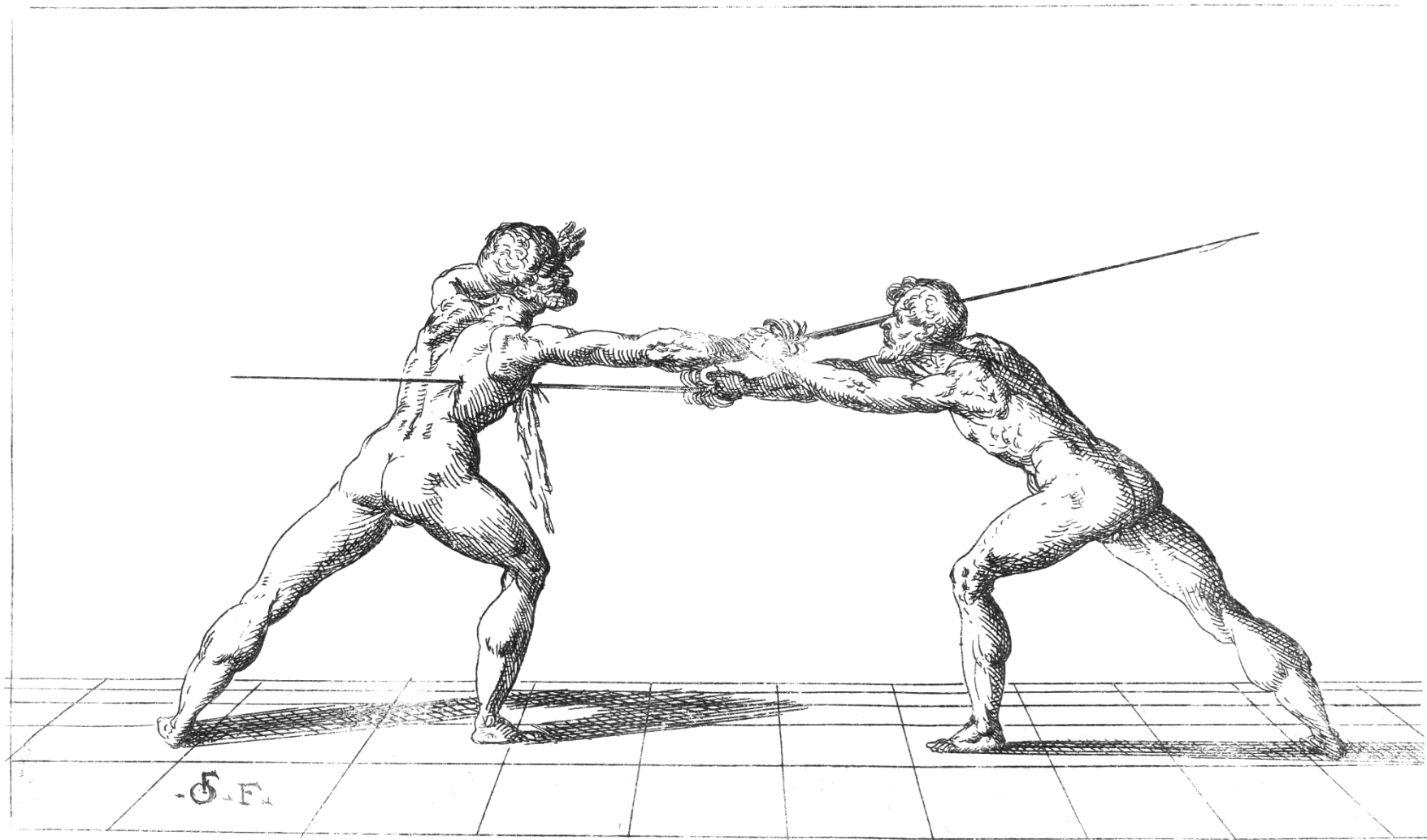


Figure 9

# THE METHOD OF WOUNDING THE CHEST WITH THE SINGLE SWORD WHEN THEY<sup>44</sup> ARE AT measure with the swords equal

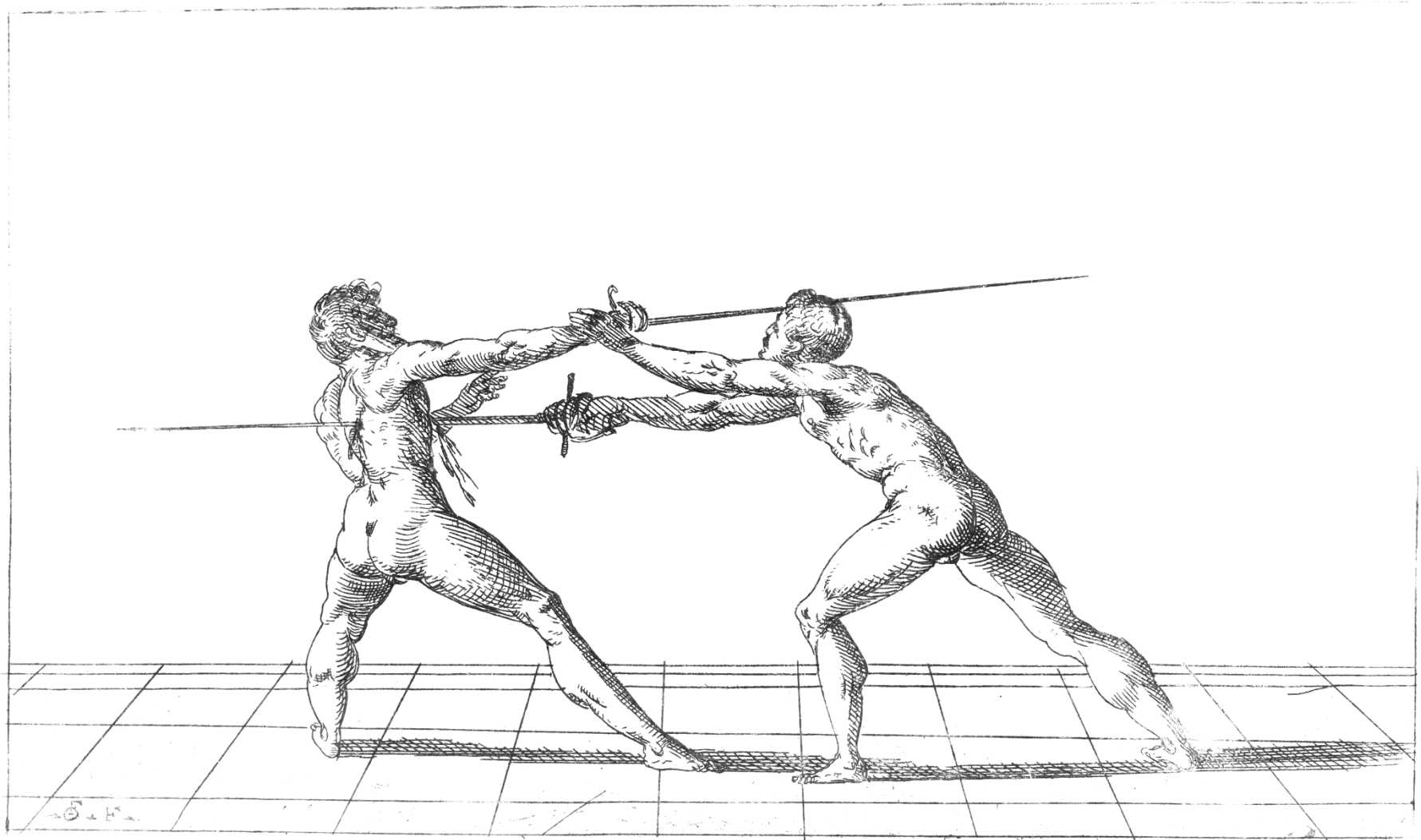
The present figure is an artificial way of wounding the enemy in the chest and securing oneself from his sword so that he cannot offend while you pass to wound him. It is done in this way: It is necessary to place oneself in guard with the sword forward on the left side<sup>45</sup> and, if the enemy comes to bind you and cover your sword with his, let him come until he is at measure with you. Disengage when he is at measure with you, putting your sword inside of his and directing the point toward the enemy's face. If he does not attempt to parry, wound him resolutely, running with the right edge of your sword on the edge of his as I said above, turning your wrist and bringing your body across somewhat. If the enemy comes to parry and wound you while you disengage, however, do not throw the thrust<sup>46</sup> but hold it a little outside, and in the same tempo that he wants to parry and wound, redisengage your sword under the hilt of his, aiming at the enemy's chest so that you strike him there safely, extending a little with the sword as you see in the present figure, taking care to disengage and redisengage it in the same tempo, never holding it still so that the enemy does not find it. In the movement he makes in order to parry, pass to him with your vita on the outside, taking care to place your hand on the hilt of his sword. This pass produces this effect: It removes his ability to wound you and you can wound him how and where you wish and please.

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<sup>44</sup> The two fencers.

<sup>45</sup> *On the left side means as said, you put yourself in quarta and disengage and proceed in terza in order to wound the enemy either resolutely in case he does not parry or by passing with the left foot. If it passes you will come to grips and wound as said and as the figure shows.*

<sup>46</sup> *Means if the enemy throws the stoccata, you do not throw during it.*



*Figure 10*

### *THE PASS BY MEANS OF FEINT AT A DISTANCE*

This is a way of passing at the enemy with artifice so that he does not perceive it, and it is highly regarded for the effect it illustrates, as seen in the present figure where one passes with a feint and proceeds to wound the enemy. It is done in this way: It is necessary to see in which guard your enemy positions himself and how he is arranged and go to bind him in guard, directing the point of your sword at his face. If you see that he stays waiting and doesn't move when you find yourself almost at measure, strongly throw a thrust at his face as figure number ....<sup>47</sup> shows. If he does not parry strongly, you produce the effect of figure number ....<sup>48</sup> and have no need to perform other feints, but if he parries, you will both be with your swords equal. Immediately return backward outside of measure and put yourself in the same guard as at first and, when you are almost at measure, feign throwing the same thrust at his face. While he attempts to parry it, disengage the point of your sword under the hilt of the enemy's with your wrist, being sure to keep the enemy's sword outside of your vita. Then, in the same tempo, pass, running with your sword over the hilt of his, accompanying it with the left hand and immediately putting it over the hilt of the enemy sword so that he cannot give you a riverso in the face, so that without doubt you will wound him, since he does not see your goal. This done, leap out of measure and replace the sword within that of the enemy, securing yourself in the above way and, beating his sword, you will wound him again with two or three resolute and irreparable thrusts.

#### *The pass by means of feint over the point of the sword*

This is another, not commonly used, kind of disengage and feint which produces the effect of the previous two figures. It is done so: One must put oneself in guard with the sword to the left side, with the arm extended and long. Letting the enemy come to bind you in the described way, disengage your sword over the point of his when he is at measure. If you see that he does not parry, throw at him strongly and resolutely, as I have said to you, which will not require other feints. If he parries, though, do not stop the sword but avoid the guard of his sword, pass in the above way, and wound him in the chest, withdrawing afterwards as said.

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<sup>47</sup> The placeholder was never replaced with the proper figure number reference when the book went to print, and it remains missing in Paolo Frambotto's 1628 reprint. Jakob de Zeter's 1619 German/French version refers to Figure 7.

<sup>48</sup> The figure number is missing in both the 1606 and 1628 printings. Jakob de Zeter's 1619 German/French version refers to Figure 8.

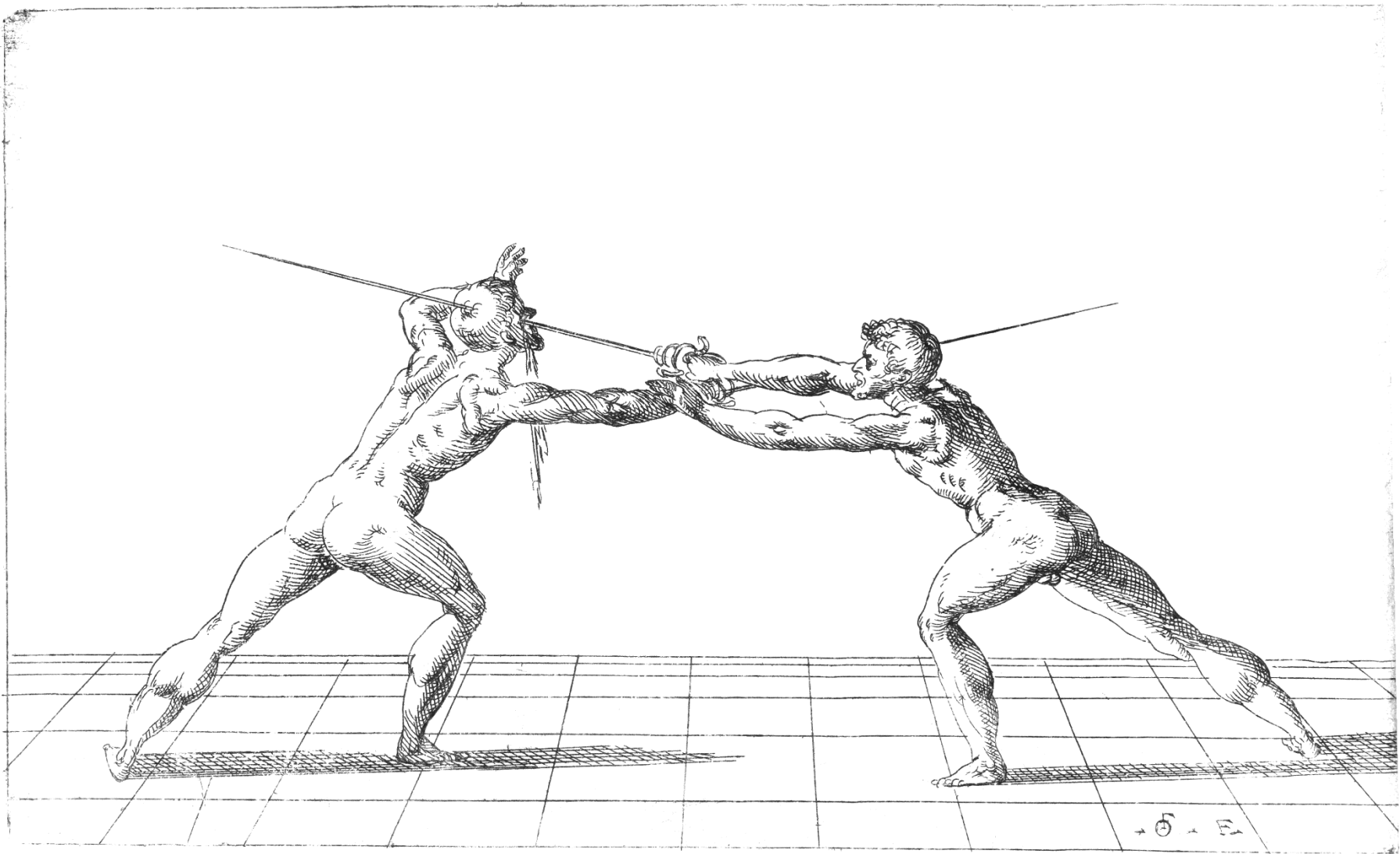


Figure 11

## THE FEINT TO THE FACE AT A DISTANCE

This feint is different only in that the previous feint completes its disengage under the hilt of the sword and this does so over it in order to throw at the enemy's face. This stoccata becomes a feint if he parries and is resolute if he does not. Then the same guards, distances, and measures are observed in the rest. One likewise carries the vita and sword as seen in the figure and immediately returns outside of measure as soon as the thrust is thrown. The most important thing is knowing how to make the feint natural so that it cannot be distinguished from resolute, which is done in this way: The point is turned (for example) upward on the outside at his face and, in advancing with the point underneath the hilt of the enemy sword to wound him inside, it is necessary that the thrust wounds his face or chest with the disengage. This is what is meant by "natural feint". |However, you are advised never to perform a feint if the enemy does not parry resolutely, because you would be in danger of both wounding each other and end up in danger.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Note*

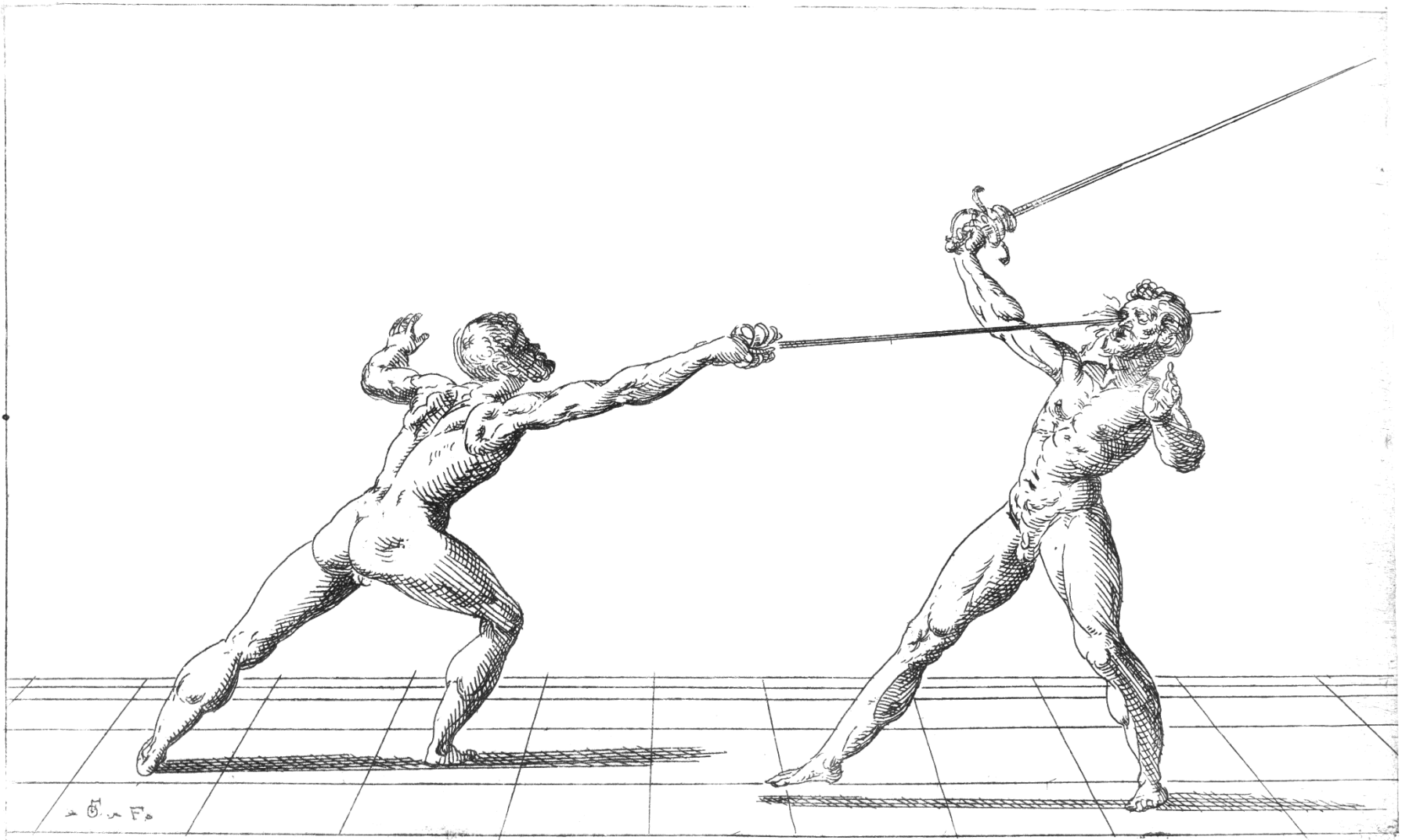


Figure 12

# THE PROPER METHOD TO DELIVER A THRUST WITH THE SINGLE SWORD WHILE THE ENEMY THROWS

a cut

This figure teaches you to avail yourself of the tempo in order to give your enemy a stoccata to the face while he throws a cut at your head—when he raises his sword, he can be given a stoccata while it is in the air and before it reaches you. Note how this is done. After having positioned yourself in whichever guard you like, go to bind your enemy. When you are at measure, if the enemy throws a cut toward your head, make use of the tempo in the raising of his sword, enter forward, and push the sword at his face so that you will without doubt wound him while his sword is in the air, as you see in the figure.<sup>50</sup> But, in throwing, turn your wrist and the right edge of the sword upwards, holding your arm long and high, and make the guard of your sword cover your head so that if the enemy drops his sword, you are covered and he cannot offend you. It is necessary, however, to throw this thrust quickly. If it were not performed quickly, the enemy would parry it and wound you. After you have thrown, quickly withdraw backward outside of measure, securing yourself with your sword against that of the enemy.

I did not want to put all the methods of parrying cuts, which are many, in my first book. Rather, I have placed this alone for you, it appearing to me most useful and commodious for learning how to recognize the tempo and make use of it—something necessary to understand at all times.

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<sup>50</sup> *The fourth figure at page 25.*



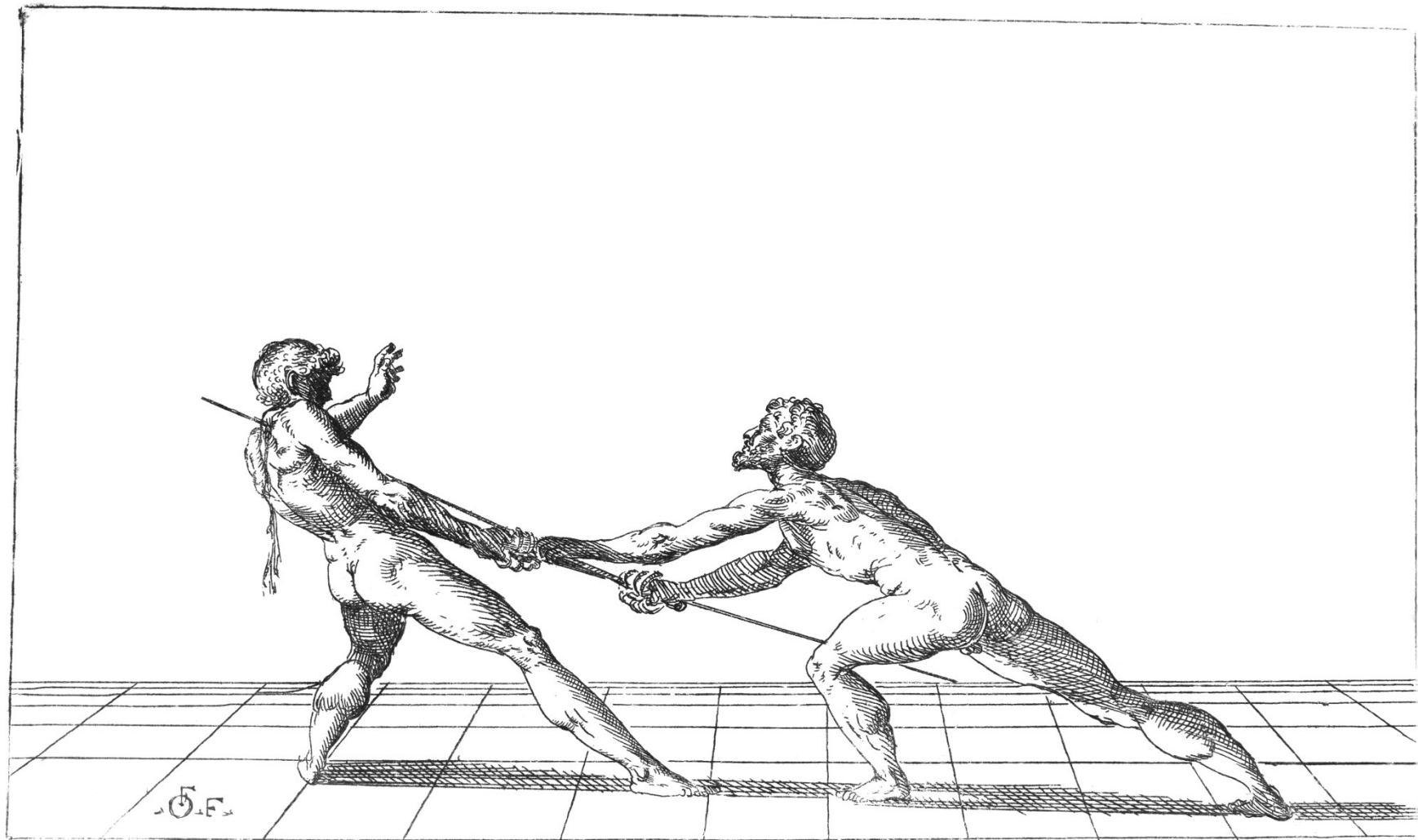


Figure 13

## *THE PROPER METHOD TO SAFELY WOUND*

*with the single sword using both hands*

This figure shows you a method of safely wounding the enemy which is impossible to parry. It is done in two ways: First, it is necessary to find occasion to have your sword equal with the enemy's, yours on the outside. You then shove your sword at the enemy's face which, if not parried strongly, strikes him in the face as seen in the fourth figure.<sup>51</sup> If he parries well and strongly, extend with your left foot, putting your left hand over your sword, pressing strongly with both hands, directing the point toward the enemy's chest and lowering the hilt of your sword as seen in the present figure, taking care to do all these things in one tempo.

Next,<sup>52</sup> arranged in guard in the aforesaid way but with your sword on the inside, I want you to disengage the sword as if to wound on the outside and, in the same tempo that you disengage the sword, place your left hand over your sword and beat the enemy sword with yours using the strength of both hands. That beaten away, immediately pass forward with your left foot as seen in the figure. For this to turn out well for you, be aware that it is necessary to do all these things in one tempo—that is, disengaging the sword, placing your hand on it, beating the enemy's sword with yours, and passing forward with the left foot. Not doing these things in one tempo, you could fail and be in danger, as you would be with certain valiant men who know how to disengage the sword quickly and well. Therefore, to succeed at this, you must do it quickly and suddenly.

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<sup>51</sup> *The fourth figure is at Page 25.*

<sup>52</sup> This is the second manner mentioned at the beginning of the lesson, rather than an action that follows from the first.

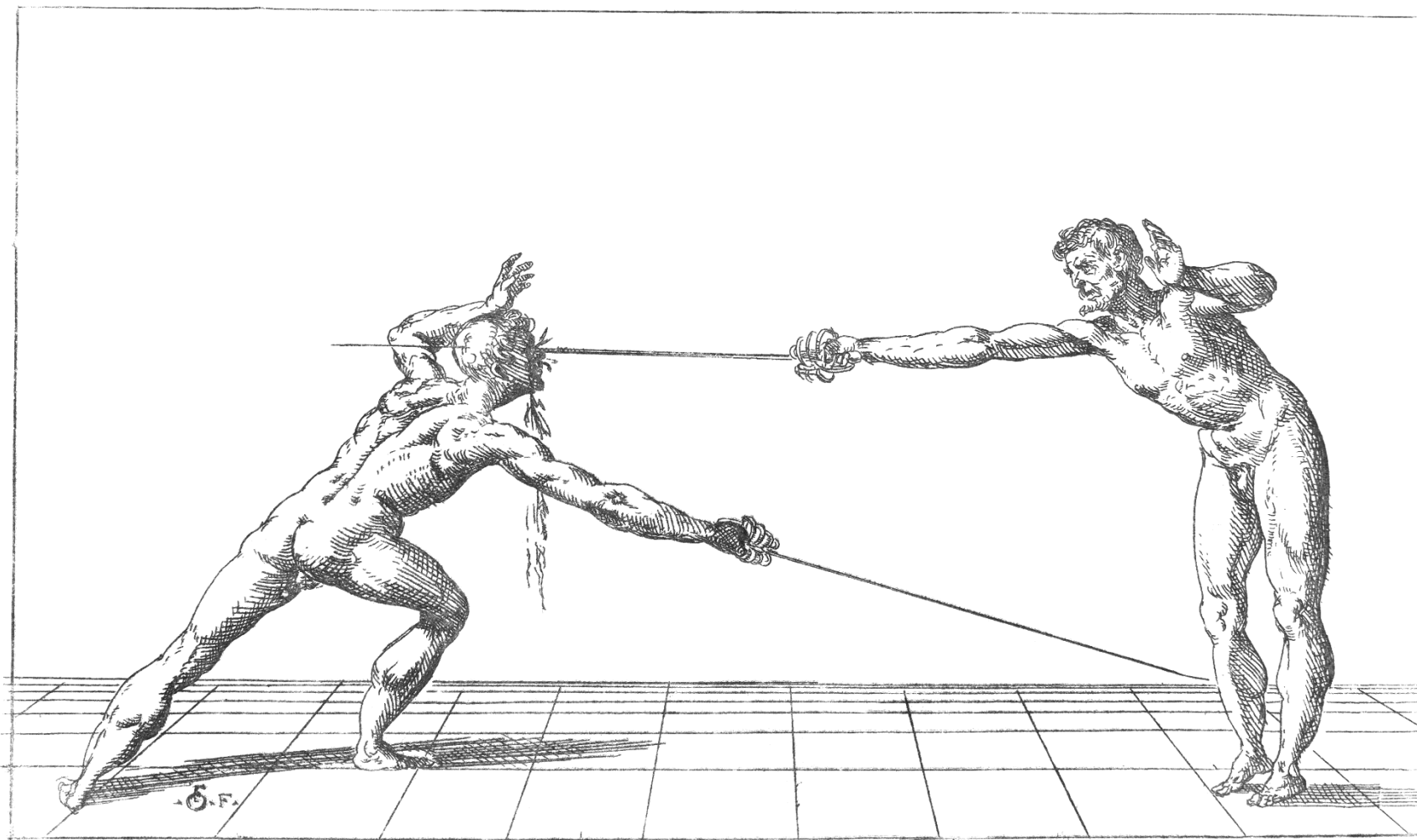


Figure 14

## THE PROPER METHOD TO DEFEND AGAINST THE CUT OR RIVERSO THAT COMES AT THE LEG

In this lesson, wherein we will discuss the mandritto or riverso cut to the leg, it is not possible for me to say anything further to teach parrying and wounding the enemy in the same tempo. Rather, I will say why the enemy ends up offending himself on the point of your sword. The enemy dropping a dritto or riverso at your leg, though, it is necessary that he lengthen his step and vita and bring his face forward. While the enemy drops to wound you, you then move your front leg, lifting it backward, and in the same tempo throw a thrust at his face so that he wounds himself of his own accord without the ability to parry, nor can he then wound you. Then (as I have said other times) return backward outside of measure.

And, since the present lesson is very artificial, it is necessary to learn it in order to be able to make use of it in such an occasion as the figure clearly shows you.

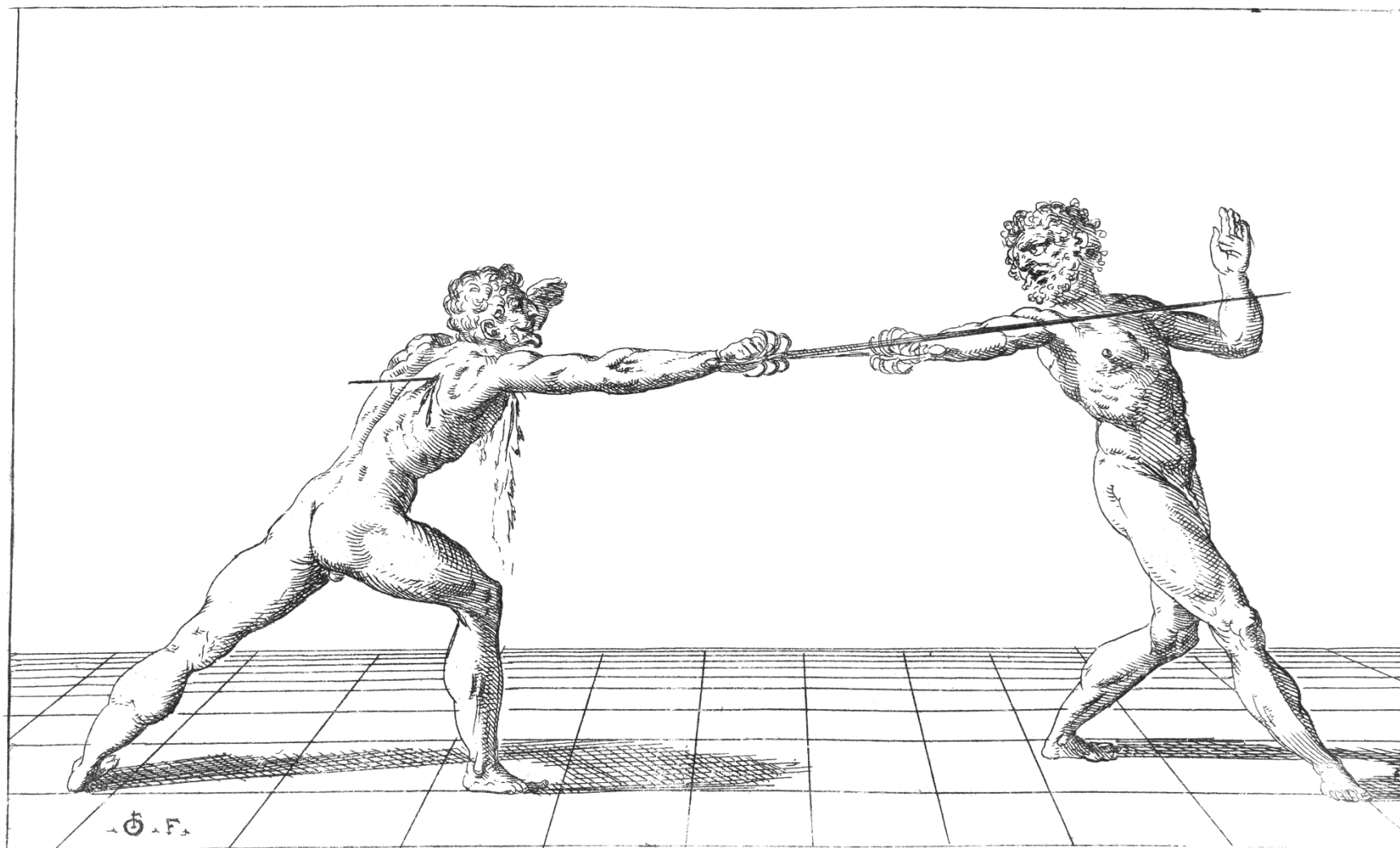


Figure 15

# THE INQUARTATA

## OR SLIP OF THE VITA

Knowing the inquartata, or slip, is necessary for mastering the body. However, this is not ordinarily used in schools, except by the French in order to exercise the vita. Truthfully, many are these slips, or inquartate, but I decided to show only three of them in this, my first book—in my view the safest and most beautiful, as revealed in the present figure.

The first of these is performed by positioning yourself in guard outside of measure with the right foot forward, with the sword long and the arm extended, standing strongly on the right side, holding the point of the sword toward the enemy's face. Let the enemy come to bind you and when he is almost at measure, disengage the sword a little wide as a feint. In the tempo the enemy attempts to parry, redisengage the sword, returning it to its first position, running along the edge of his sword with the disengage in a way that no sooner have you have disengaged than you have wounded the enemy, because if you attempt to disengage the sword and then wound, you would be in danger, since there would be two tempi. Bring both the left leg and shoulder crosswise and, turning, produce the effect, giving him (as seen in the figure) a thrust in either the face or chest without him perceiving your goal, holding your arm stiff, with the hilt of your sword covering you, far from the sword of the enemy. Keep your eyes on his face, taking care not to turn your face with your vita, as some do, because you would find yourself in danger and not see your action. After this, immediately return backward out of measure with your sword over his, securing yourself as above.

### *The inquartata, or slip of the vita*

This inquartata is no different from the first except in the way in which it wounds—that is, taking care in running along the edge of the enemy's sword to go to wound him under the pommel of his sword, lifting the arm with the wrist, as seen in the figure, and after having turned your person, to stop yourself and not pass onto the enemy in order not to come to grips, because you would be in danger of being unable to return outside of measure and secure yourself from him. This inquartata is very difficult to parry. In fact, I will say it is impossible when it is done judiciously.

*THE THIRD INQUARTATA,  
or slip of the vita*

This third in quartata is the most beautiful and safe of all. It is done in this way: Place yourself in guard as in the other two, holding the sword along the right side with your arm extended and firm. While the enemy comes to bind you with his sword over yours, disengage the sword with a turn of your wrist when you are at measure. If he does not parry, strike him in the face and produce the effect of the figure without needing to do more. If he parries, though, you find yourself with your swords equal. Strongly affront your sword onto his so that he also affronts and, disengaging as he does, run under the hilt of his sword with the disengage, turning your body as above, and wound him in the chest, which he will not perceive. The effect of the present figure produced, you will return outside of measure, securing yourself as in the other lessons.

*Artificial method to strike the chest, affronting the swords<sup>53</sup>*

In the previous lessons I showed the method of the in quartate—that is, how the swords are affronted on the outside in order to come to wound the enemy on the inside. Now I will briefly say how the swords are carried on the inside and wound on the outside. As you meet with the enemy, affront strongly with the edge of your sword, holding the point toward his face with your forte over the enemy's sword. If he is weaker than you, give him a stoccata in either the face or chest that he cannot parry. If he is stronger than you, feeling how much your sword is affronted, disengage your sword under his hilt so that his falls downward and he similarly takes a thrust from which he cannot defend himself. In the same tempo, pass without any danger and, placing your left hand on his hilt, wound him with three or four thrusts that cannot be avoided. Then, return outside of measure, securing yourself as above.

*The method of playing single sword against single sword with resolute thrusts<sup>54</sup>*


In schools, there are many who resolutely come throwing thrusts, imbroccate, and cuts when they assail the enemy, giving no tempo and always throwing with fury and very great impetus. These things ordinarily confound and disorder every beautiful player and fencer, for which reason it is necessary to know how to defend oneself in such an occasion. It is necessary that you place yourself in guard against the enemy sword with yours ready to defend, outside of measure, in a pace that is restrained rather than long. In the tempo that he throws a thrust, imbroccata, stoccata, or other similar blow at you, beat his sword with the forte of yours and, immediately lengthening your step, throw him a thrust and wound him in the chest or face and quickly return backward with the lead foot to where you were before, resting your sword on his in order to secure yourself from it, in a way that he cannot wound if he

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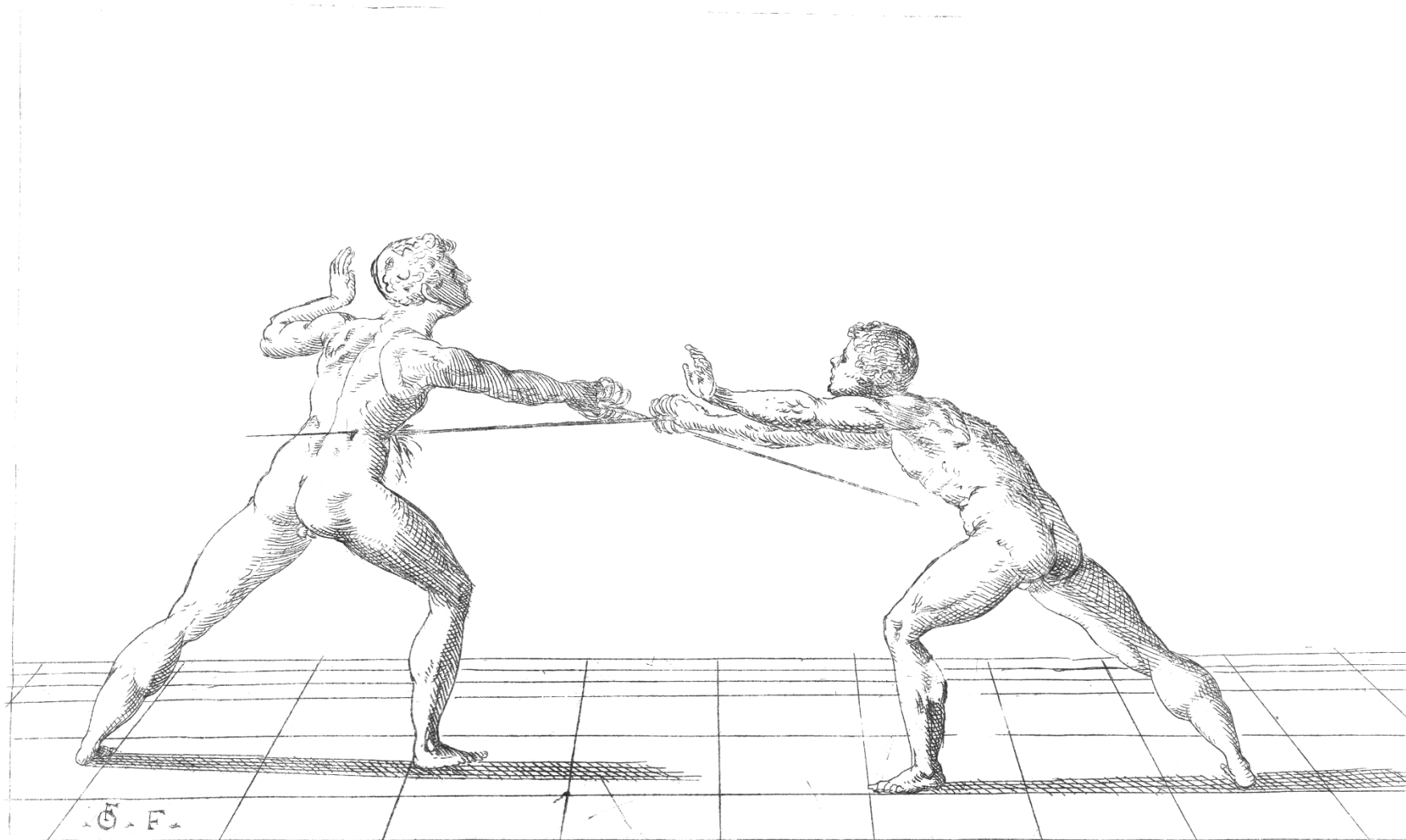
<sup>53</sup> As for the fourth.

<sup>54</sup> Note: How you must strive against one who throws resolutely like a beast.

does not disengage. If the enemy disengages, turning your wrist to the outside, beat his sword again with the forte of yours and, lengthening your pace, throw him a thrust and wound him, then quickly return backward with the foot as above, likewise securing yourself from his sword with yours. If he redisengages again, always repeat doing the same.

 This lesson is more useful than beautiful and contains two tempi which you can make before the enemy has time to make one of them: The first is the parry, the other the wound. Since they have been examined, you have understood.





*Figure 16*

# PARRYING STOCCATE

## THAT COME AT THE CHEST WITH THE SINGLE SWORD

Seen in this figure is the safe method of parrying thrusts that come at your chest and then wounding the chest. It is done in different ways because some pass at a distance, others stand at measure, and others inside the measure, but someone who understands tempo and knows how to parry well, as my figure shows you, will defend against all these methods. Therefore, note that being with your enemy with your swords equal, if he passes in order to wound you in the chest, it is necessary to follow his sword with yours in the same tempo, lowering, however, the point of yours by raising your wrist, parrying with the same and passing with your left foot toward his right side, taking yourself away from his sword.<sup>55</sup> Wound him in the chest, holding your left hand over the hilt of his sword, and then, the stoccata given, disengage the sword in the way described above, returning backward outside of measure.

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<sup>55</sup> *Here one avoids with an oblique step of the left foot, removes oneself from the line, and wounds. The same can be done with sword and dagger by wounding in terza outside.*

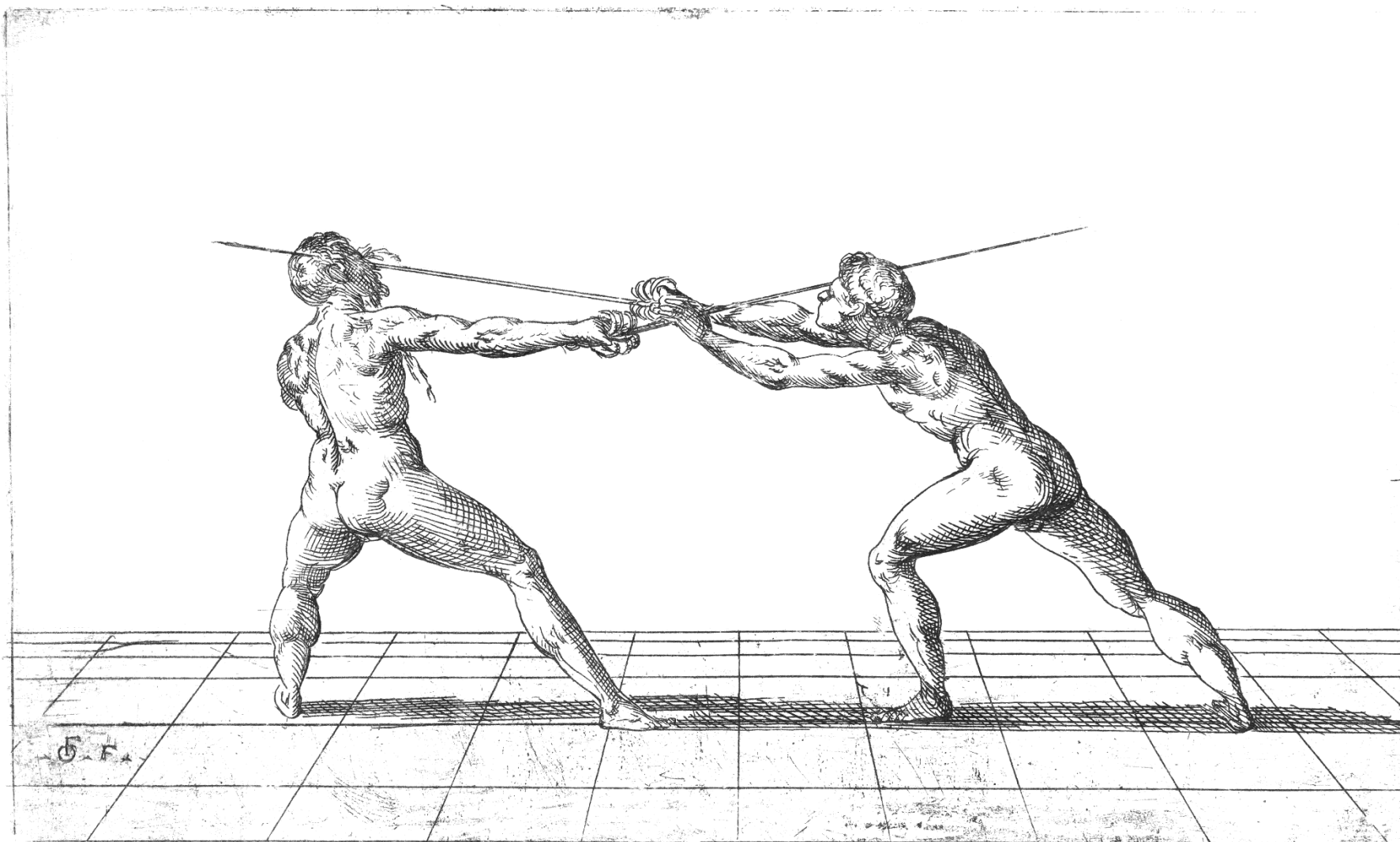


Figure 17

## THE THRUST TO THE FACE, TURNING YOUR WRIST

With this figure you are taught a very beautiful method of wounding your enemy's face. It consists entirely in seizing the occasion of being with the swords equal and causing your enemy to be in the motion of parrying by giving him the suspicion that you want to disengage the sword. In the same tempo, turning your wrist, put your left hand on the guard of his sword and extend with the foot in one tempo so that you strike him in the face, as you see. Performing it properly, it cannot be parried. Having struck, extend with your left hand over the hilt of the enemy's sword and, redisengaging the sword, you can give him two or three stoccate wherever you wish. Then, return backward outside of measure, always holding your sword over theirs, as above.

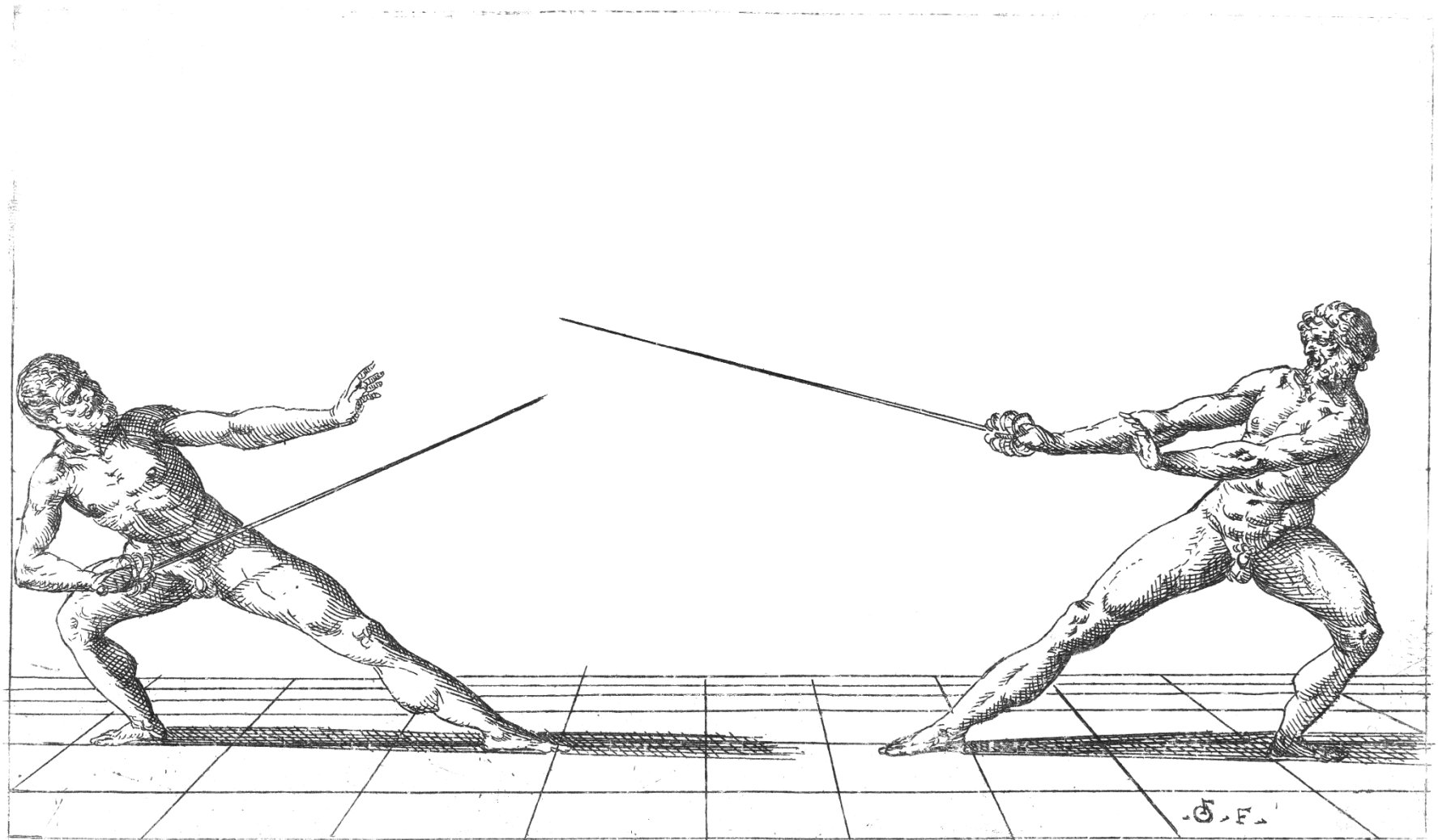


Figure 18

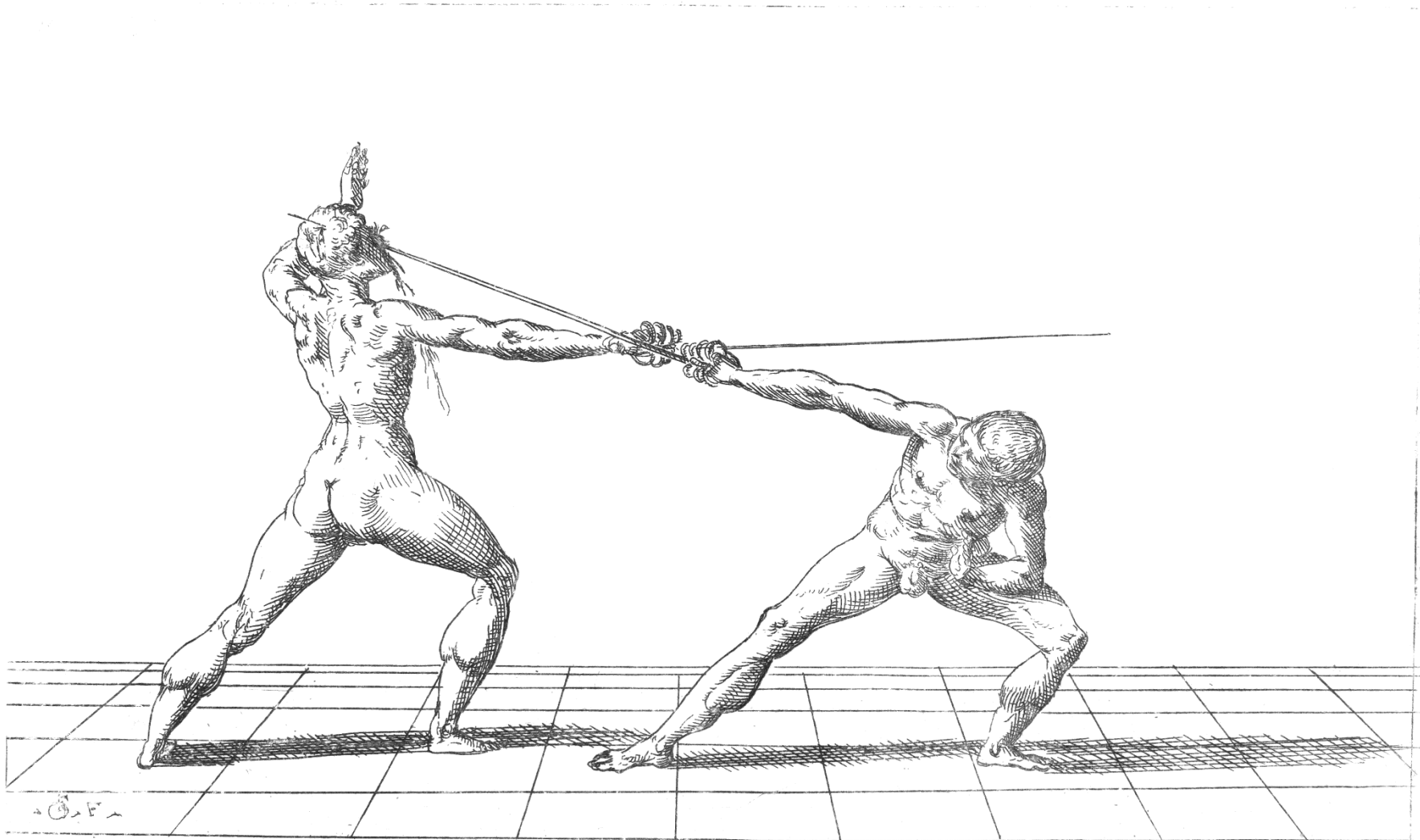


Figure 19

## THE COUNTERDISENGAGE AT A DISTANCE

These<sup>56</sup> are one and the same counterdisengage at a distance against someone who has their left foot forward and wishes to pass with an inquartata. With these figures I wanted to show you the postures and the wound so that it can be thoroughly understood. It is necessary (when someone is coming to bind you with their left foot forward) that you stand in guard as you see in this figure, giving your enemy a chance to throw at your chest. If he is a valiant man, he will quickly pass with his foot and strongly turn his wrist in the manner of the inquartata in order to defend himself from your sword. In the same tempo that he passes, redisengage the sword under the hilt, lowering your vita as you see in the present figure so that you wound him in the face before he wounds you. In fact, he is unable to parry while he carries his foot forward to pass. In order to produce the effect of this figure on occasion, it is necessary to practise well the two figures placed above.

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<sup>56</sup> The two preceding figures.

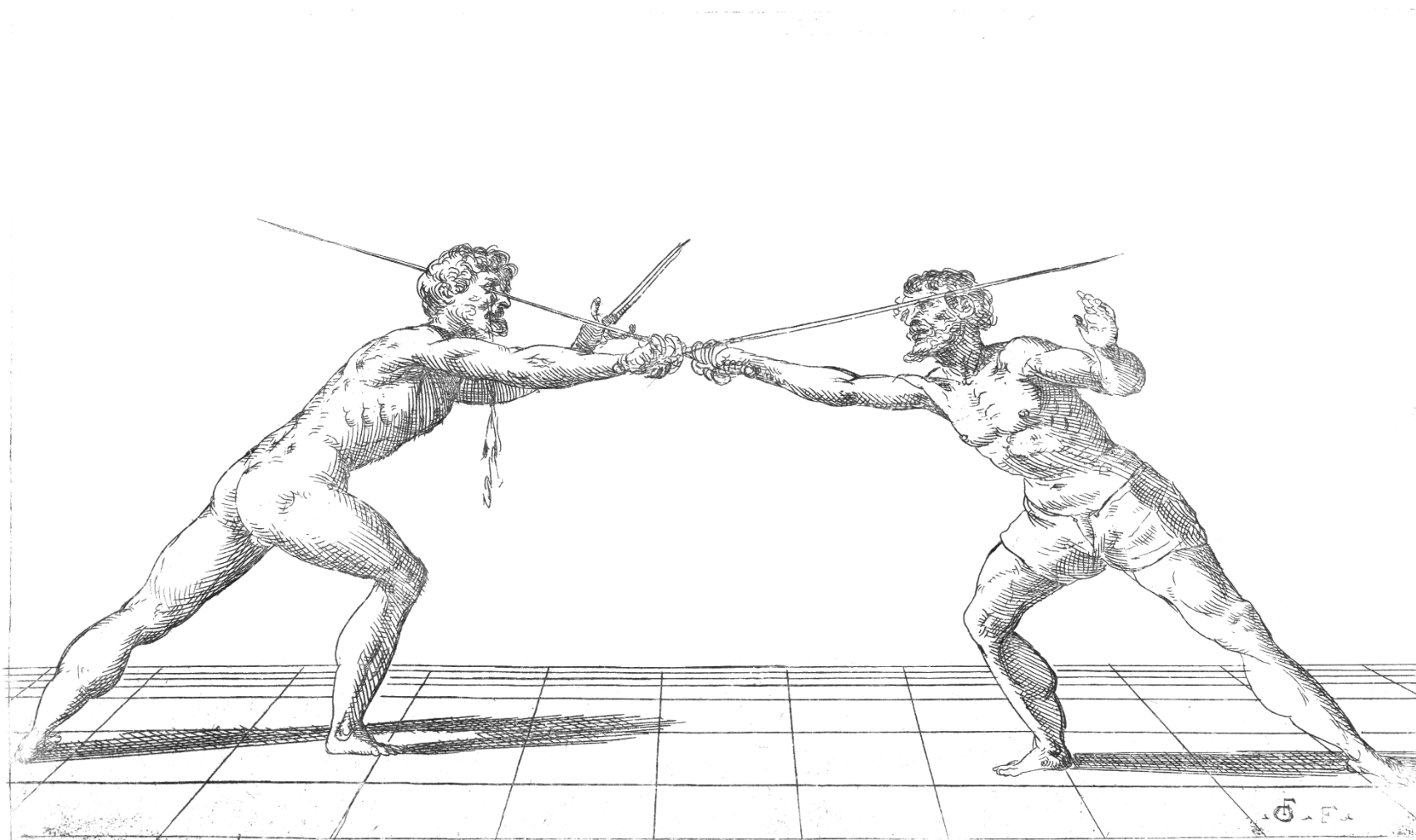


Figure 20



## *THE METHOD OF PLAYING WITH THE SINGLE SWORD*

*while the enemy has sword and dagger*

With this figure, I will show you parrying and wounding with the single sword against an enemy who has sword and dagger. Stand with your right foot forward in a just pace, with your vita back, holding the sword forward, ready to parry and wound when there is a tempo. It is necessary that you are not first to throw because you would be in danger, since, in throwing, your enemy could parry your stoccata with his dagger and, if he were a valiant man, you would not be able to parry his. If you stand in guard as I said above, however, ready to parry, showing fear of him so that he throws in disarray, when he throws you will parry strongly with the forte of your sword and throw the stoccata at his face because he will throw at you strongly and long and, while throwing, his dagger will remove itself so that you can strike him safely. Having struck, immediately return backward outside of measure, holding your sword in his in the way described above. Do the same as many times as he throws, taking care, however, not to throw at his chest, which would not be safe because someone who has sword and dagger will be much bolder than someone who has the single sword, and thus, thinking to give you as many stoccate as he likes, he will disconcert himself in order to throw at you first, not thinking of anything else. | If you stand in guard judiciously, though, you can parry safely and strongly and always wound your enemy in the face, then safely return outside of measure with your sword over his. If your enemy were to disengage the sword to the inside, turn your wrist and parry and throw strongly, as I said. | If you see that he wants to fly upon you, pull yourself backward and throw at him in the tempo that he moves to come forward. | If you were to find yourself in guard with your sword in his and he would like<sup>57</sup> to first parry with the dagger and then wound, in the tempo that you see him lower the dagger in order to parry, immediately disengage the sword above the dagger in the way described in figure number ...<sup>58</sup> Immediately afterward, return outside of measure with your sword over his. Take care, however, not to throw if he stays in guard and you do not by chance see some tempo which allows you to do so without him wounding you, as described above when tempo and measure were discussed. | If he stands in guard waiting, either out of fear or, instead, with art in order to deceive you, stay outside of measure with your sword over his and seek to parry and wound safely according to the occasion.

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<sup>57</sup> The original text is “vorreste”, or “you would like”. As our fencer’s opponent is the one with the dagger, it is likely that this is a mistake in the text.

<sup>58</sup> The figure number is missing in both the 1606 and 1628 printings. Jakob de Zeter’s 1619 German/French version refers to Figure 21.

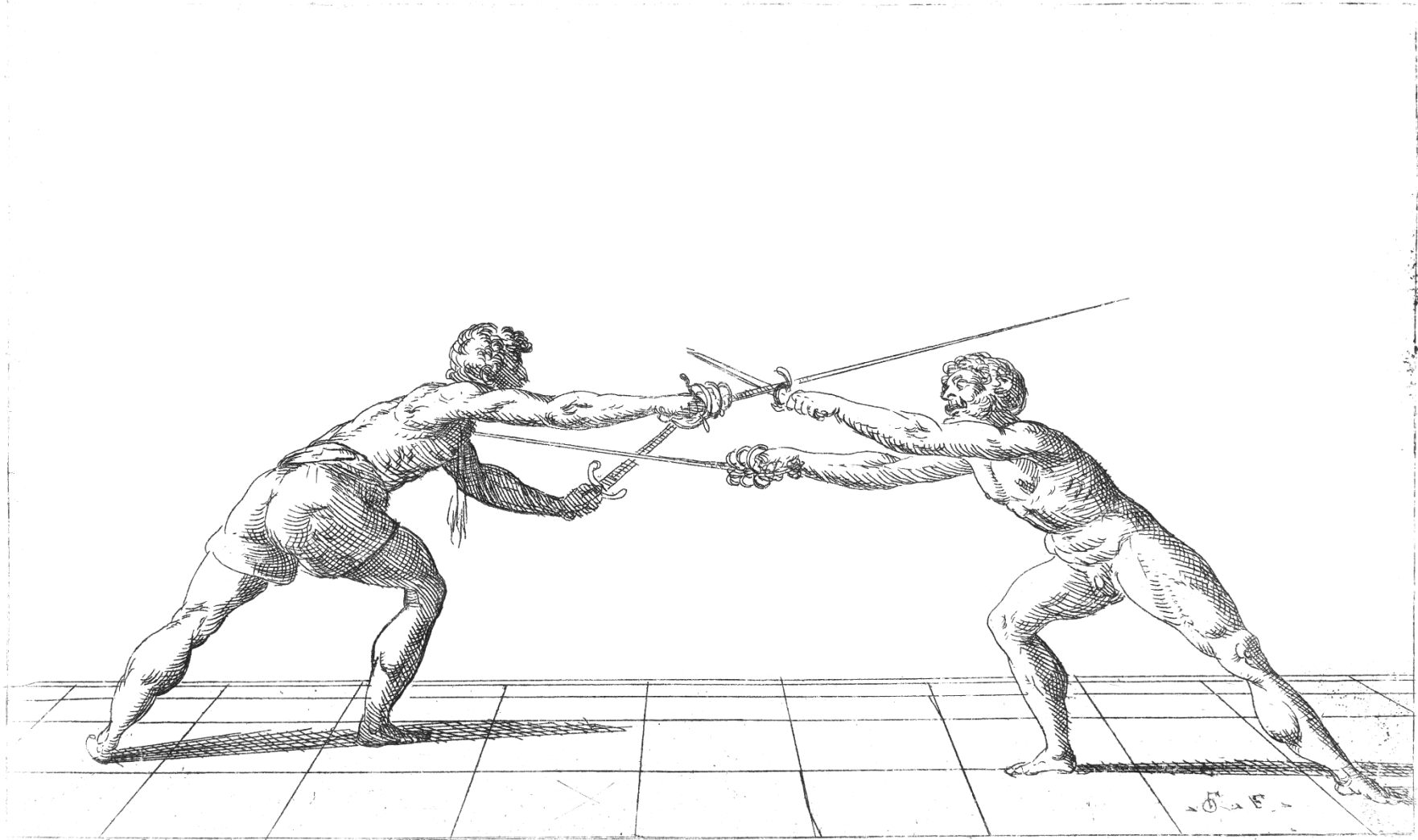


Figure 21<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> First figure of the sword and dagger.

## THE METHOD OF PARRYING THE STOCCATA THAT COMES

at your face from the right side with sword and dagger

To achieve the effect of the present figure, it is necessary to stand in guard as you will learn. I say it is necessary to stand in a just and strong pace, holding the weapons ready to parry and wound, with the dagger guarding against the enemy sword and your sword ready to wound where it is most convenient. If you see that your enemy wishes to wound you with a thrust to your face, parry with the edge of the dagger and wound the enemy in the right shoulder in the same tempo. Doing so in one tempo, it will be difficult for him to parry. In order to produce the effect that he cannot parry, it is not enough to simply understand these things, but it is also necessary to know how to put them into effect—that is, in the same tempo to stand strongly in guard with the right foot forward, the left foot strong on the ground supporting all the body, as always holding the right foot back in order to quickly extend forward and backward according to the occasion, always holding the point of your sword toward the face or chest of the enemy, the dagger's height in proportion to the enemy sword, inclining the vita back rather than forward, standing with an alert and vigilant eye, a bold heart, and without one bit of fear of the enemy. If (while you stand in this guard) your enemy comes to throw a thrust or imbroccata at your face, throw a stoccata at his face, parrying with the dagger in the same tempo so that you produce the effect of the figure. Be sure that you parry strongly and safely, turn your head and vita a little, and while he throws at you, parrying strongly, throw your stoccata in the same tempo. If you were to parry first, then throw, it would not be possible because your enemy could withdraw his arm and body and be in tempo to parry, and your life would be in danger, but if you parry and wound in the same tempo, you give him the stoccata under the flank of the sword while he comes forward. It is difficult for him to parry when you do it justly and in tempo, taking care that when you throw the stoccata you keep your left foot firmly and strongly on the ground, and that you bring your vita backward as soon as you have thrown, returning outside of measure. |Having thrown, to return backward safely<sup>60</sup> it is first necessary to bring the head, then the vita backward, then the leg will come of its own accord. If you were to pull your leg first, your head would go forward, your life would be in danger, and you would not be able to return outside of measure. Throwing a long and strong stoccata without knowing how to return backward with your life is worthless. In order to produce the effect of the figure, it is necessary to practise so that when you see that your enemy wishes to throw, you throw in that tempo so that your stoccata arrives before his, even if he is first to throw.

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<sup>60</sup> *How to withdraw after the blow is thrown.*

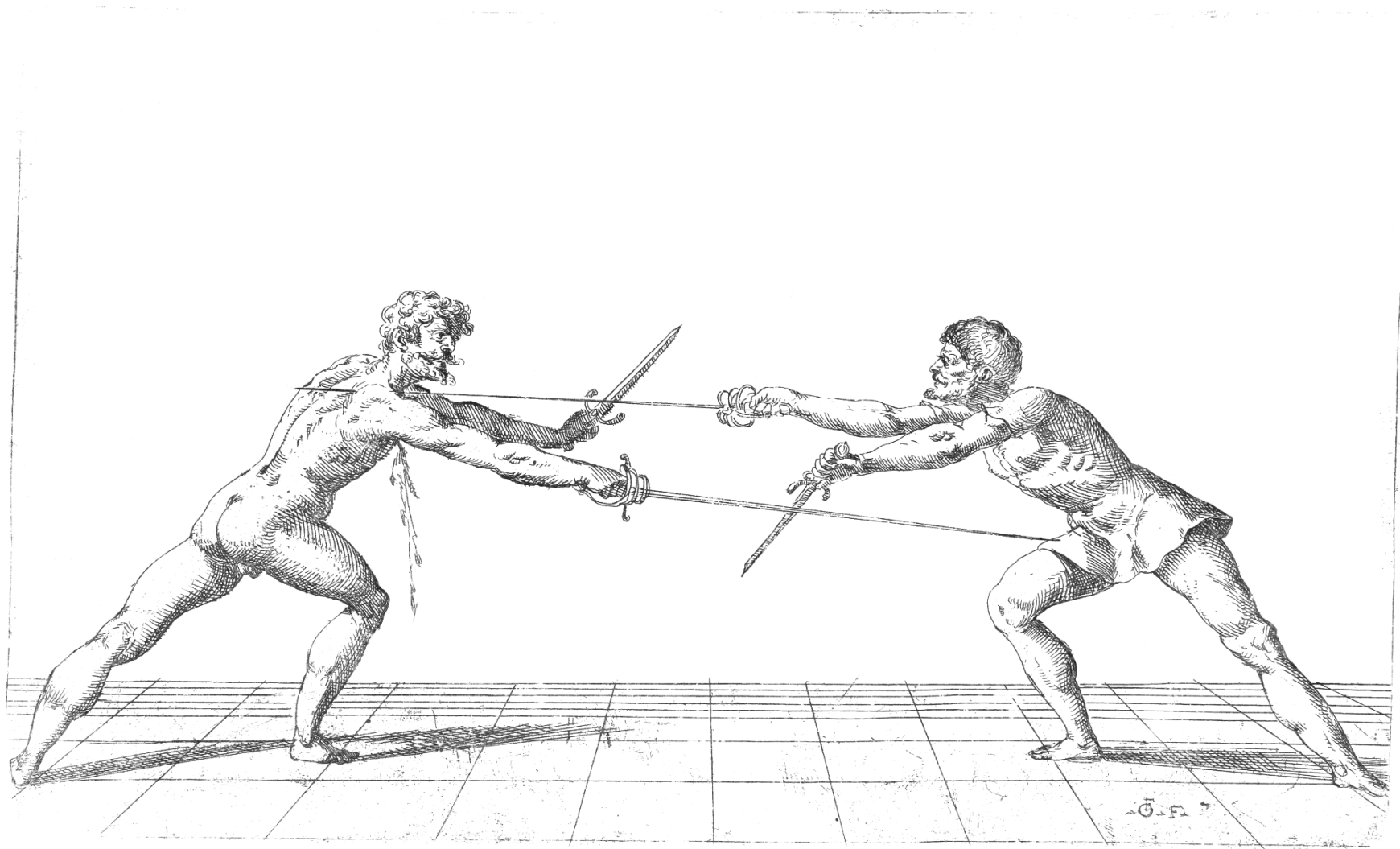


Figure 22<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Second figure of the sword and dagger.

# THE PROPER METHOD OF PARRYING THE STOCCATA

THAT COMES TOWARD YOUR LEFT FLANK

In the present figure, it is necessary to place yourself like in that above should your enemy intend to throw at your left flank. Stand with your dagger guarding against his sword and, in the tempo that he throws, parry with the edge of the dagger and wound him in the sword shoulder in the same tempo. In fact, throw your stoccata quicker than he throws his so that, keeping your eye and mind alert and your vita withdrawn, in the tempo you see that he wants to throw his, you throw your own at his shoulder and parry his in that tempo. He will not be able to parry yours because you wound in the tempo that he comes forward, as seen in the figure. The stoccata thrown, return backward outside of measure in the same way as in the first figure of sword and dagger.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Figure 21.

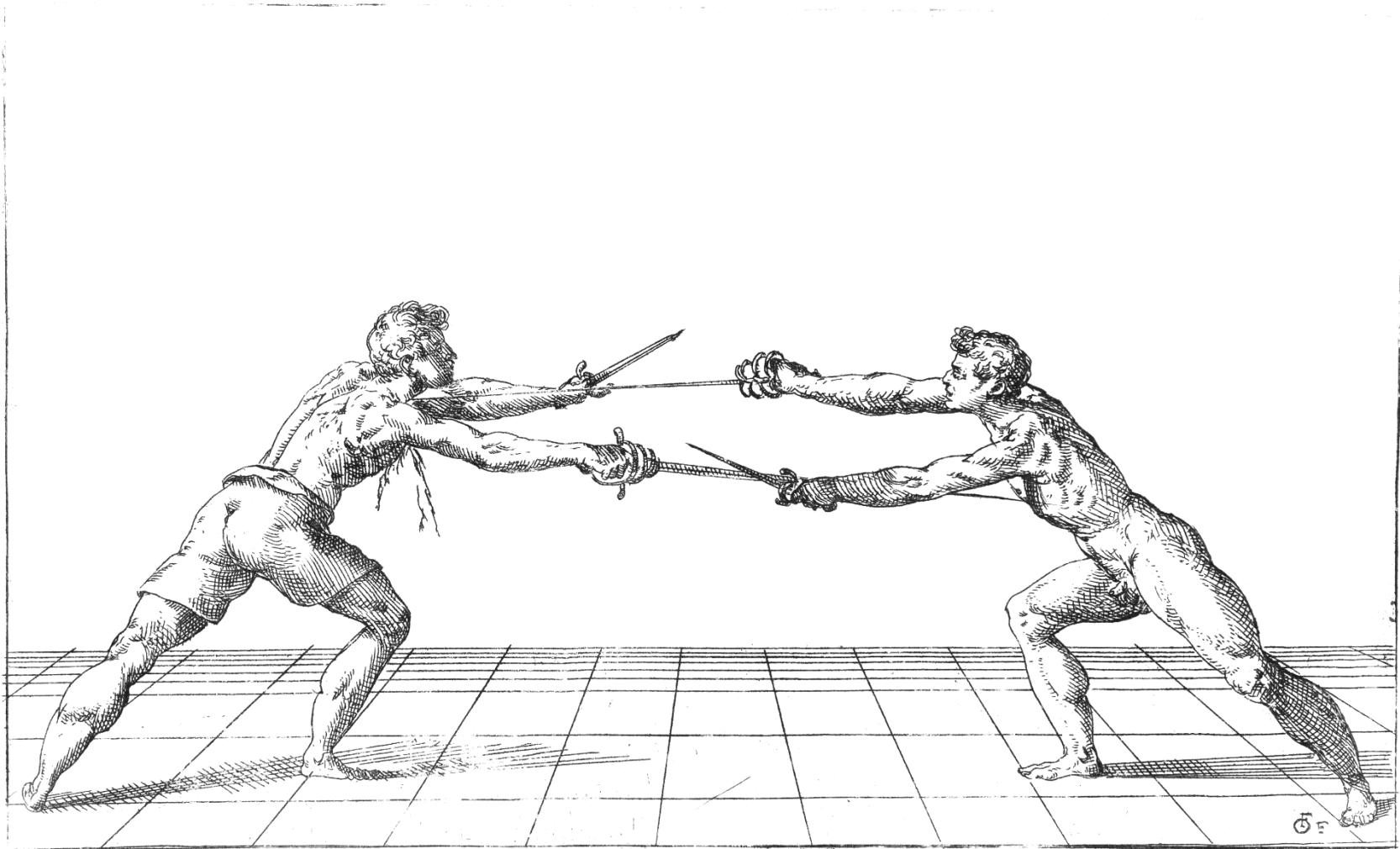


Figure 23<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Third figure of the sword and dagger.*

# THE METHOD OF PARRYING

## A THRUST THAT COMES

### AT YOUR RIGHT FLANK WITH SWORD

#### AND DAGGER

As you see in this figure, if you are in the same guard described above and your enemy comes to bind you with the sword low in order to wound you in the right flank, it is necessary that you raise your sword arm and stand in third guard<sup>64</sup> for an imbroccata with the point of your sword toward his face or chest, with the dagger a little low and the arm extended to guard against the enemy sword. As the enemy throws the thrust at your flank, parry and throw an imbroccata at his sword shoulder in the same tempo so that you see the effect of the figure. Actually, when you see you see that your enemy intends to throw the thrust, it would be better to throw yours earlier so that you wound him more easily. The stoccata, or rather, imbroccata, given, immediately return backward outside of measure.

These are the four kinds of wounding and parrying with the stoccata and imbroccata, and they proceed in the same way—that is, parrying and wounding in the same tempo, in carrying the feet always taking care to extend a little with the right foot as you throw the stoccata and to keep the left strong on the ground. Be advised that keeping the left foot on the ground will seem difficult to you at first, but with practice you will easily succeed.

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<sup>64</sup> The guard Giganti refers to here is unclear.



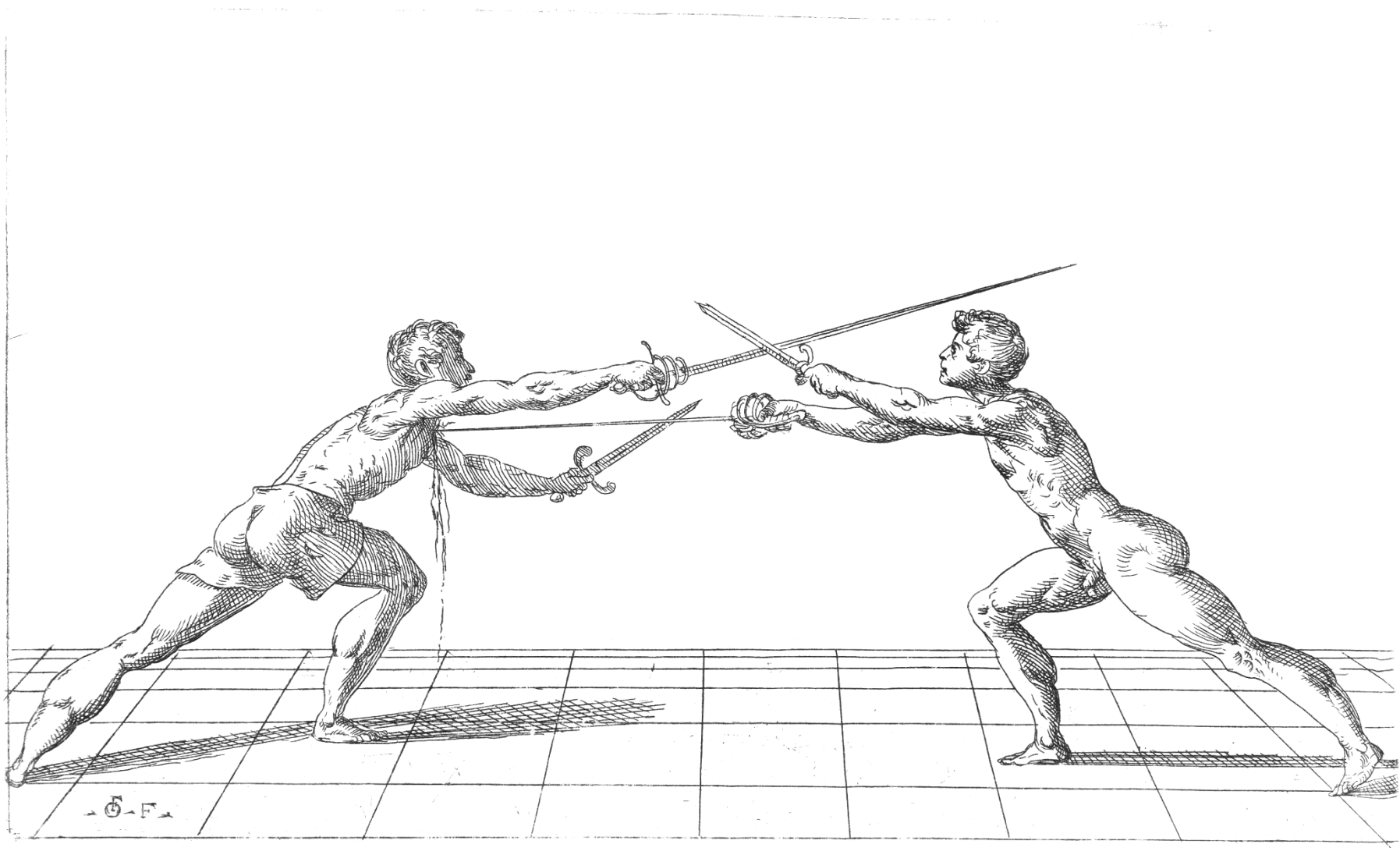


Figure 24<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Fourth figure of the sword and dagger.



# THE METHOD OF PARRYING THE THRUST OF SWORD AND DAGGER AT YOUR FACE

In order to put into effect everything that is shown to you by this figure, it is necessary that you stand in the same guard and, seeing the enemy coming to throw a stoccata at your face, parrying with the edge of your dagger, to push the stoccata at his flank earlier, in one tempo, so that you produce this effect. Take care, however, when you see the point of your enemy's sword toward your face, to hold the dagger a little wide from it, giving him occasion to throw at you, and to parry with the dagger and turn your head a little in order to pull it away from his sword when he throws. In the tempo that you parry, wound him with a thrust in the flank that is uncovered and closest to wound. As soon as you have wounded, return backward in the described way.

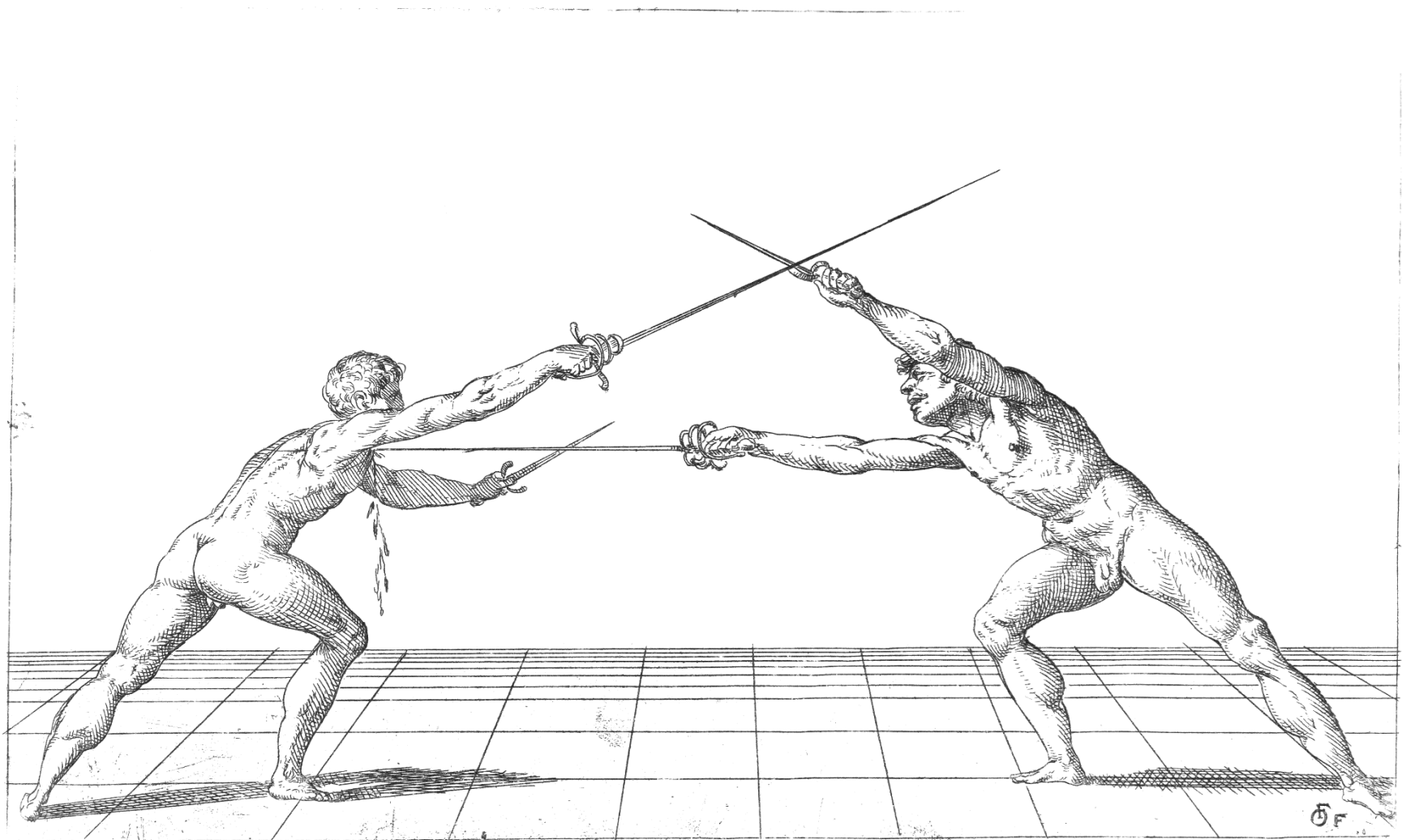


Figure 25<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Fifth figure of the sword and dagger.

# THE METHOD OF PARRYING THE CUT

## ON THE HEAD WITH SWORD AND DAGGER

As you see, from this figure one learns to parry cuts that come at the top of the head with the dagger. It is necessary to position oneself in the guard of the first lesson<sup>67</sup> and, if your enemy comes throwing a cut upon your head, to meet it with your dagger edge and in the same tempo throw a thrust at the enemy's face, extending forward a little with your right foot. Do these three things together so that you see the effect of the figure. For a great cut, it would be better to kill it so that it does not have half the strength. While your enemy lifts the sword to throw the cut, throw your stoccata at his face so that he must draw his head back a little and clamp his eyes shut, and you will remove the strength of the cut. To produce this effect, it is necessary to be bold and unafraid of the sword or the enemy, to understand parrying with the dagger well, and to understand how to throw a straight and long stoccata well. Watch that you do not parry the cut with the flat of the dagger, as a strong cut would cast it from your hand and wound you on the head.<sup>68</sup> If you parry with the edge, holding the arm extended, there will be no danger.<sup>69</sup> Having thrown the thrust, return backward outside of measure, as above.

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<sup>67</sup> First lesson of sword and dagger—Figure 21.

<sup>68</sup> *If one parries with the flat of the dagger it is dangerous, as that casts it from your hand and you end up wounded.*

<sup>69</sup> *It must be parried with the edge.*

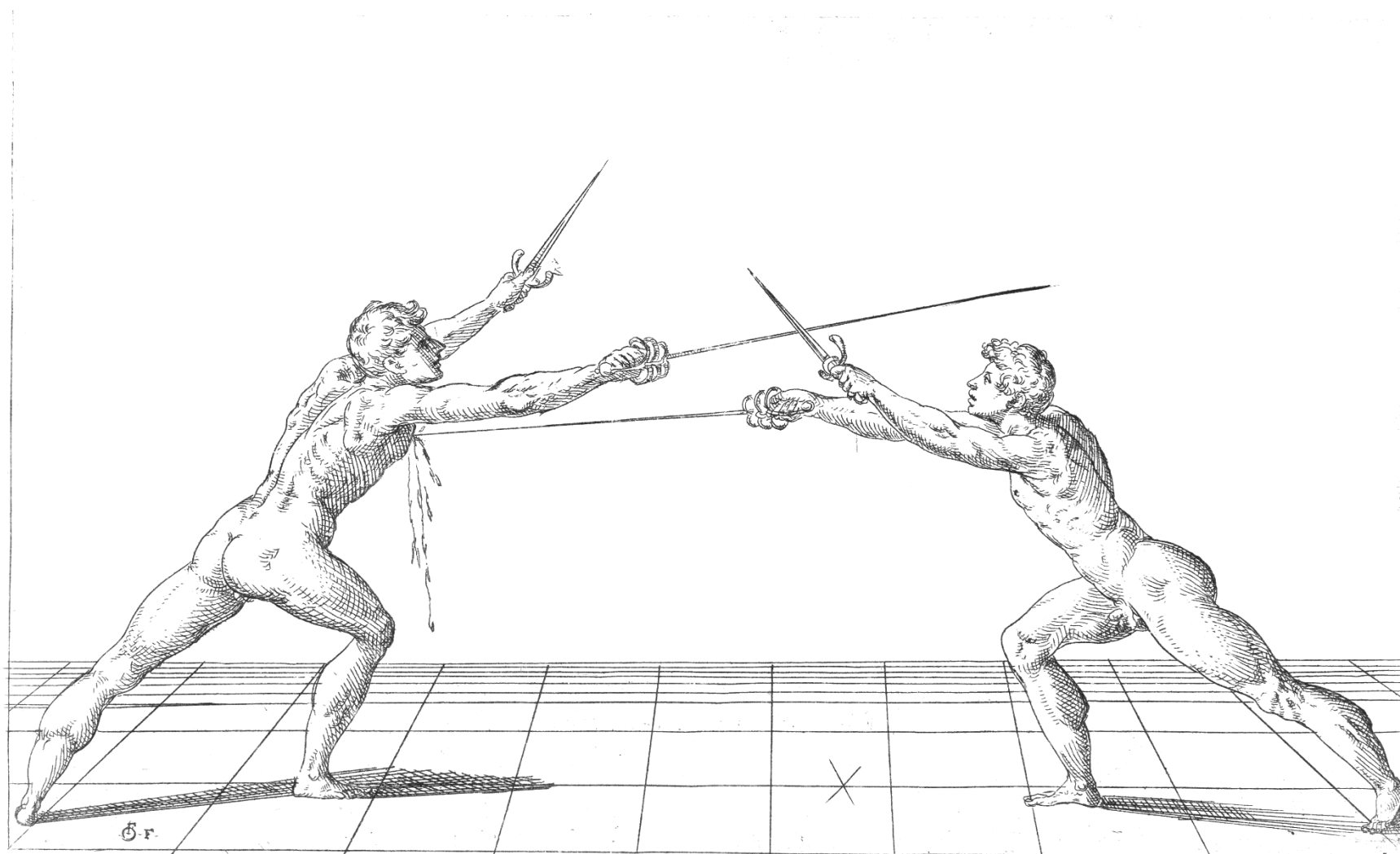



Figure 26<sup>70</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Sixth figure of the sword and dagger.

# THE METHOD OF PARRYING A RIVERSO WITH THE DAGGER

As you see, from this figure one learns how to parry a riverso that comes at the face. It is necessary to place oneself in the guard of the first lesson<sup>71</sup> with the dagger high and strong. When you see the riverso coming, go to meet it with the edge of the dagger and, in the same tempo, extend a little with the right foot, throwing the stoccata at his uncovered flank so that you see the effect of the figure. Be aware that all six of these figures<sup>72</sup> are one and the same method. It is necessary to parry and wound in one tempo, however. If you were to delay an instant from parrying to wounding, you would not produce the effect. In order to produce the effect, it is necessary to drill and practise, and, the stoccata given, to immediately return backward outside of measure.

 Be advised that these six lessons are the most important and beautiful in fencing,<sup>73</sup> but it is necessary to perform them well, to hold the dagger strongly, and when you see the sword come against you, with the thrust as with the cut, to meet it with the dagger and in the same tempo throw the stoccata where the enemy is uncovered.

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<sup>71</sup> Figure 21.

<sup>72</sup> Figures 21-26.

<sup>73</sup> *The most beautiful lessons that are in it.*

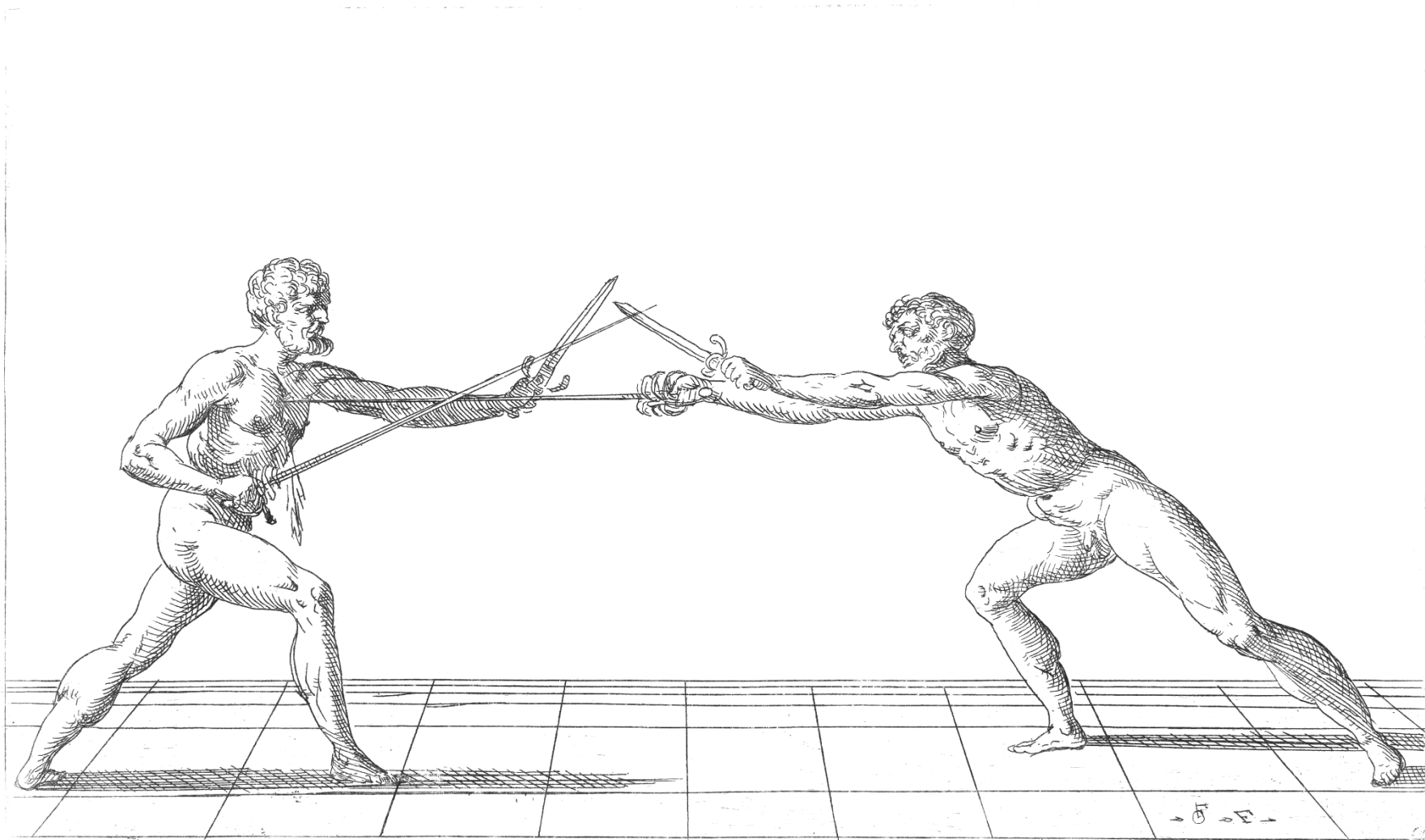


Figure 27

# THRUST THROWN AT THE CHEST WITH THE SWORD AND DAGGER

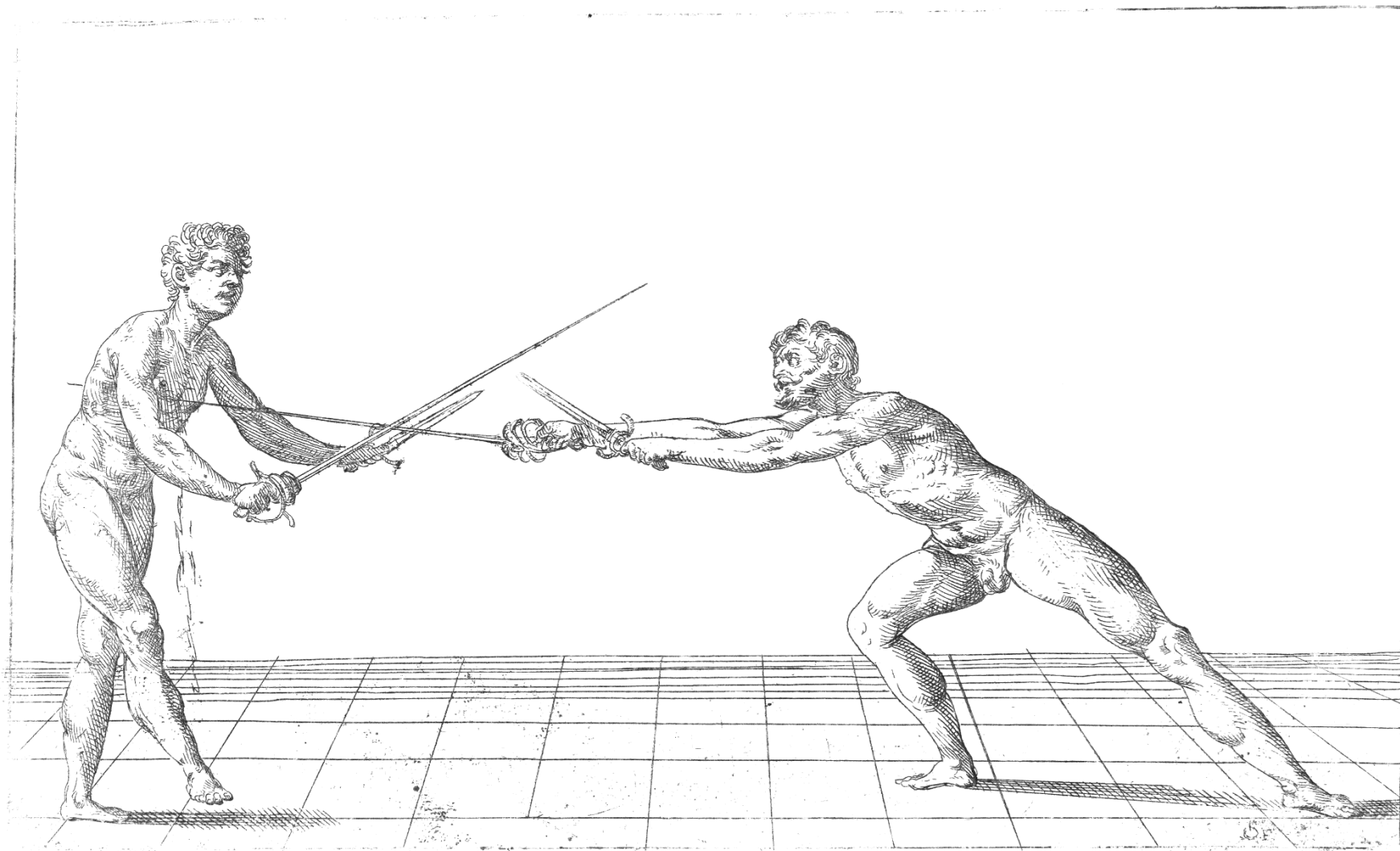
The first quality that someone who delights in the profession of arms must have is<sup>74</sup> the knowledge of how to approach to bind the enemy, give a stoccata to him, and return to guard outside of measure. To do this, it is necessary to understand the counterguards and to know how to throw the stoccata where you see your enemy is uncovered. If his chest were slightly uncovered, it would be necessary to approach slowly to bind him, with the sword low, holding the point toward the enemy's chest, the dagger guarding against his sword. When you are at measure, throw the sword first, then the vita, and after the foot so that you see the effect of this figure. This is because if you throw the sword arm and then the vita you will give him the stoccata in the chest and he will not perceive it. Otherwise, if you were to move the vita first and then throw the stoccata, you would be in danger, since he could see it and be able to parry and respond in the same tempo. Having thrown the stoccata, immediately pull yourself back outside of measure, standing in guard with your weapons ready to parry and wound because the enemy, seeing himself wounded, will disconcertedly throw either a thrust or cut at you. You will then parry and wound in one tempo as described in the first six figures.<sup>75</sup> The importance of this figure consists in (after having thrown) knowing how to return outside of measure. In order to do so safely, it is necessary (as has been said above) to bring your head back first so that the vita will come, and the leg,<sup>76</sup> because if you were to pull your leg first, you would be in danger of either falling or your enemy wounding you, since your head would go forward. This is one of the principal things that you should learn.

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<sup>74</sup> *Quality that someone who practises with weapons must have.*

<sup>75</sup> *Figures 21-26.*

<sup>76</sup> *In order to return quickly and safely outside of measure and to guard, the head is withdrawn first, then the vita follows on its own, and the leg, which must be done strongly and quickly.*



*Figure 28*



# THROWING THE STOCCATA WHILE THE ENEMY MOVES

The principal things in fencing are the recognition of measure and tempo, which we discuss in this figure.<sup>77</sup> As soon you have the sword in hand when you go against your enemy, go to bind him with your eyes alert and the weapons ready to parry and wound. In that tempo, take heed of whether he wishes to be the first to wound or not. If you see that he wants to be first,<sup>78</sup> give him a tempo so that he throws and throw at him while parrying in the same tempo, as above. If you see that he fears you and stands in guard in order to wait, however, approach him little by little to bind on the side where he is uncovered and when you are at measure, holding the dagger forward to guard against his sword, first throw the point, then the vita, and after the foot, always holding the dagger forward so that if the enemy were to throw in the same tempo you are able to parry and he does not produce an incontro, striking you both.<sup>79</sup> Having thrown, return backward outside of measure in the described way. When you approach to bind him, it is necessary that he does one of three things: Either he throws, stands solidly in order to parry, or moves to one side or another in order to take himself outside of measure. If he throws or holds firm when you are at measure, it is therefore necessary to perform it in the way described in the present lesson. If he were to move, though, either withdrawing, or here, or there, or in any way he wishes, throw the stoccata at him strongly and quickly while his foot is in the air<sup>80</sup> because while he moves, he cannot wound you<sup>81</sup> in the tempo that you throw. Then return outside of measure as usual.

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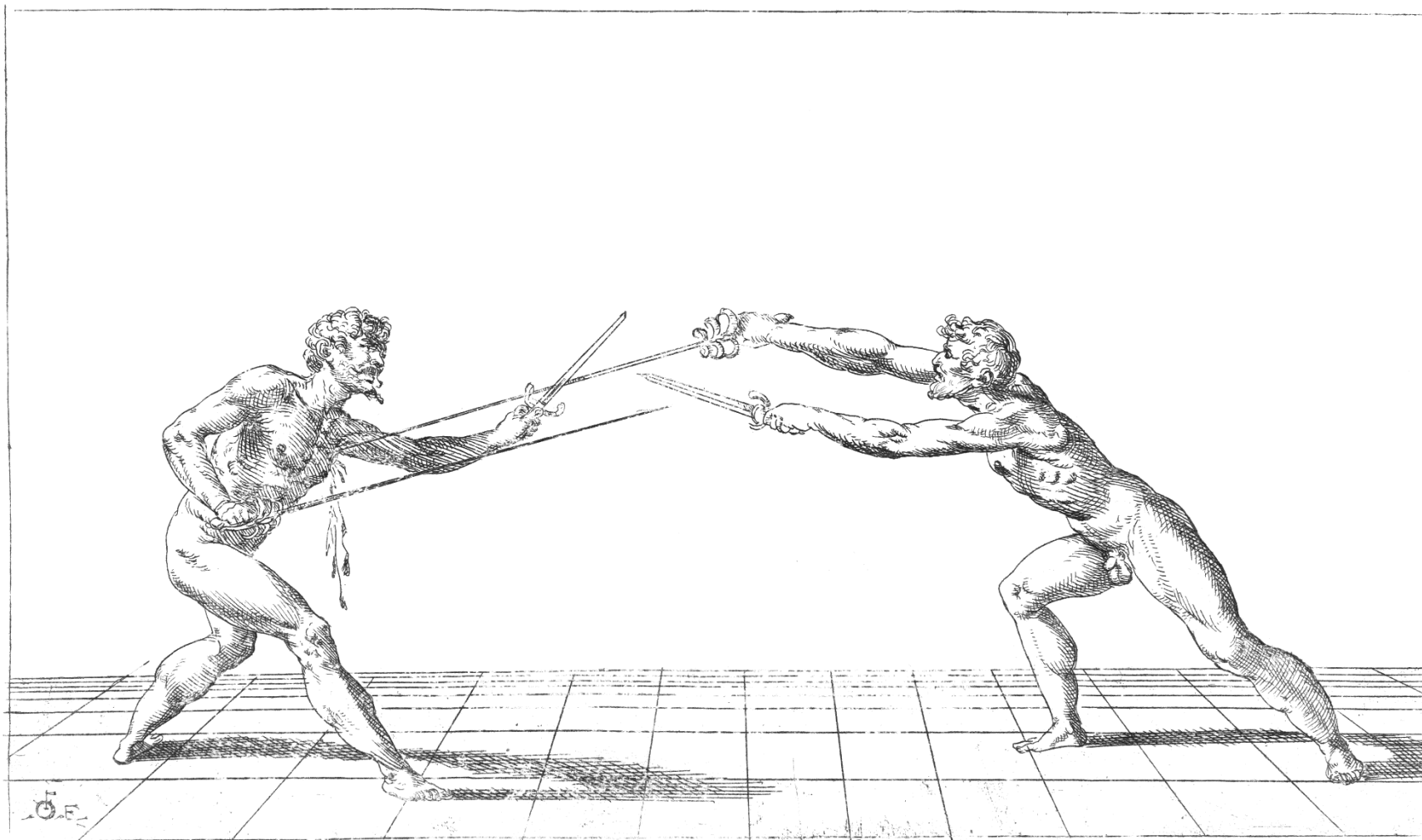
<sup>77</sup> Note: Tempo and measure are the principal things in fencing.

<sup>78</sup> ~~If you see~~ If the enemy wishes to be first to wound, give him the opportunity to throw and in the same tempo parry and wound.

<sup>79</sup> If he waits in order to parry, bind him and when you are at measure throw where he is uncovered, but in the same tempo put your dagger where his sword is in order to parry if he throws.

<sup>80</sup> The original text uses the words “in varia”, or “in varying”. This is likely an error in the text which should read “in aria”, or “in the air”, and has been corrected here.

<sup>81</sup> While the enemy moves toward you he cannot wounded in that tempo if you, at the point he moves, quickly throw the stoccata at him via an imbroccata, which it is.



*Figure 29*

## THRUST THROWN OVER THE DAGGER

In order to strike someone who holds the dagger low with a stoccata, it is necessary (as seen in this figure) to approach to bind him on the dagger side, and when you are at measure first throw the sword, then the vita, raising your wrist a little as you see in the figure in order to produce the effect. Then, return backward in the way described in Figure .....<sup>82</sup> It is very difficult to defend against someone who is practised at first throwing the sword, then the vita, afterwards quickly returning backward in the way described in lesson .....,<sup>83</sup> who knows how to approach to bind with tempo, throwing where the enemy is uncovered when at measure. |This is because he is necessarily uncovered somewhere, as the sword and dagger cannot cover everything,<sup>84</sup> and it is necessary to approach to bind him in the described way where he is uncovered.

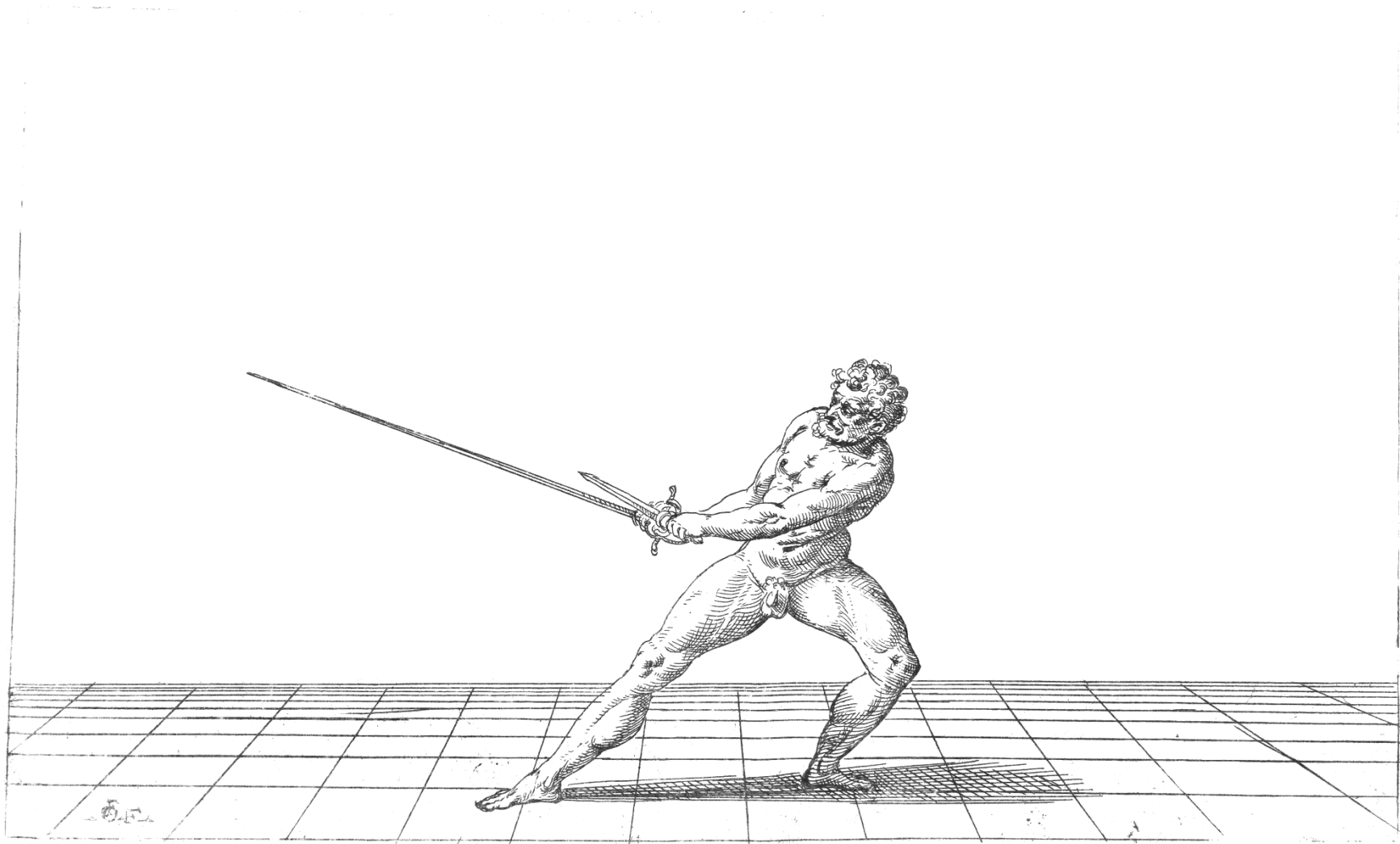
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<sup>82</sup> *As discussed in the first figure of the sword and dagger page 60.*

The figure number is missing in both the 1606 and 1628 printings. Jakob de Zeter's 1619 German/French version also omits a figure reference.

<sup>83</sup> The figure number is missing in both the 1606 and 1628 printings. Jakob de Zeter's 1619 German/French version refers to Figure 27.

<sup>84</sup> *The sword and dagger cannot cover everything.*



*Figure 30*

Many are the guards that can be made, because every method of holding the sword is a guard, as has been said, and all the guards are good to someone who recognizes tempo and measure. In battle, someone who knows how to make guards with artifice will always deceive the enemy.

## ARTIFICIAL GUARD

### UNCOVERING

#### THE LEFT SIDE

The artificial guards are infinite, but I will only place three of them in this, my first book, so that it will be a light and path for the learned to make as many guards as they wish.

The proper and first method of standing in guard with artifice is this: Uncovering one part of the body while the others are completely covered so that the enemy can only wound you in one part alone, as you see in this figure where the entire left shoulder is uncovered. This is done so that the enemy will attempt to wound you in the uncovered part, and when he sets out to do so he will be in danger, since when he attempts to throw either a thrust or cut you can parry and wound him in the same tempo, extending with the foot so that it accompanies the sword while you parry. As soon as the stoccata is thrown, return outside of measure as above. These artificial guards are for experienced and studious men who understand tempo and measure, because many things can be done in these guards. In this first especially, it is possible to approach to bind the enemy and, when at measure, that same enemy waiting, wound him where he is uncovered. If he throws, you can do many things, such as parry and wound in one tempo, parry and perform a feint, a pass, or anything that you know how to do in other guards and with which you are practised. If your enemy, standing in guard, were to throw disconcertedly, parry and wound in one tempo, or instead discordantly, and return immediately backward out of measure. This guard deceives many of those that know and do not know playing at arms because, seeing you uncovered, he will throw at that uncovered part and you, easily parrying and wounding in the way described above in the first lessons of sword and dagger, will strike him safely and easily.

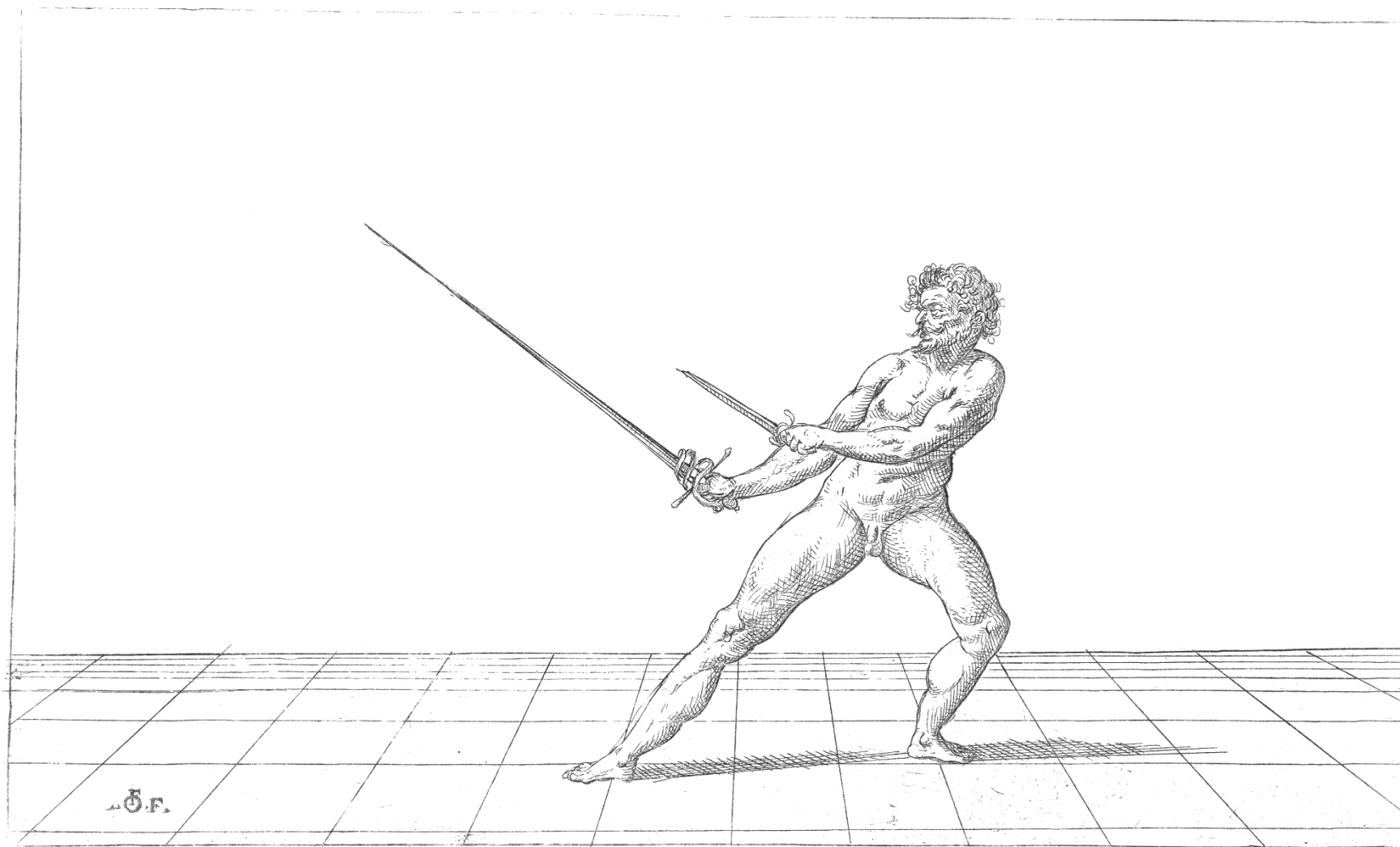


Figure 31

## ARTIFICIAL GUARD UNCOVERING THE RIGHT SIDE

This is another artificial guard which, as you see, is completely uncovered on the right side. The rest of the vita is entirely covered so that the enemy cannot wound anywhere but your uncovered right shoulder. However, you can parry with the sword or dagger as you wish and wound with a firm foot, or instead pass with your foot, as is convenient. In this guard you can perform many feints. These guards are good with those desirous to wound, who do not have the patience to wait to throw with tempo and measure, and who, when they see the enemy uncovered, come upon him without considering what he is yet able to do, often finding themselves in danger. They are also good with those who know much, since you see your actions better. This is because, him performing a feint at you, you will be able to parry it better than standing in a narrow guard, and the resolute thrusts are defended against even more easily by bringing the vita back or parrying, turning the vita, according to how quick and long the thrusts are.

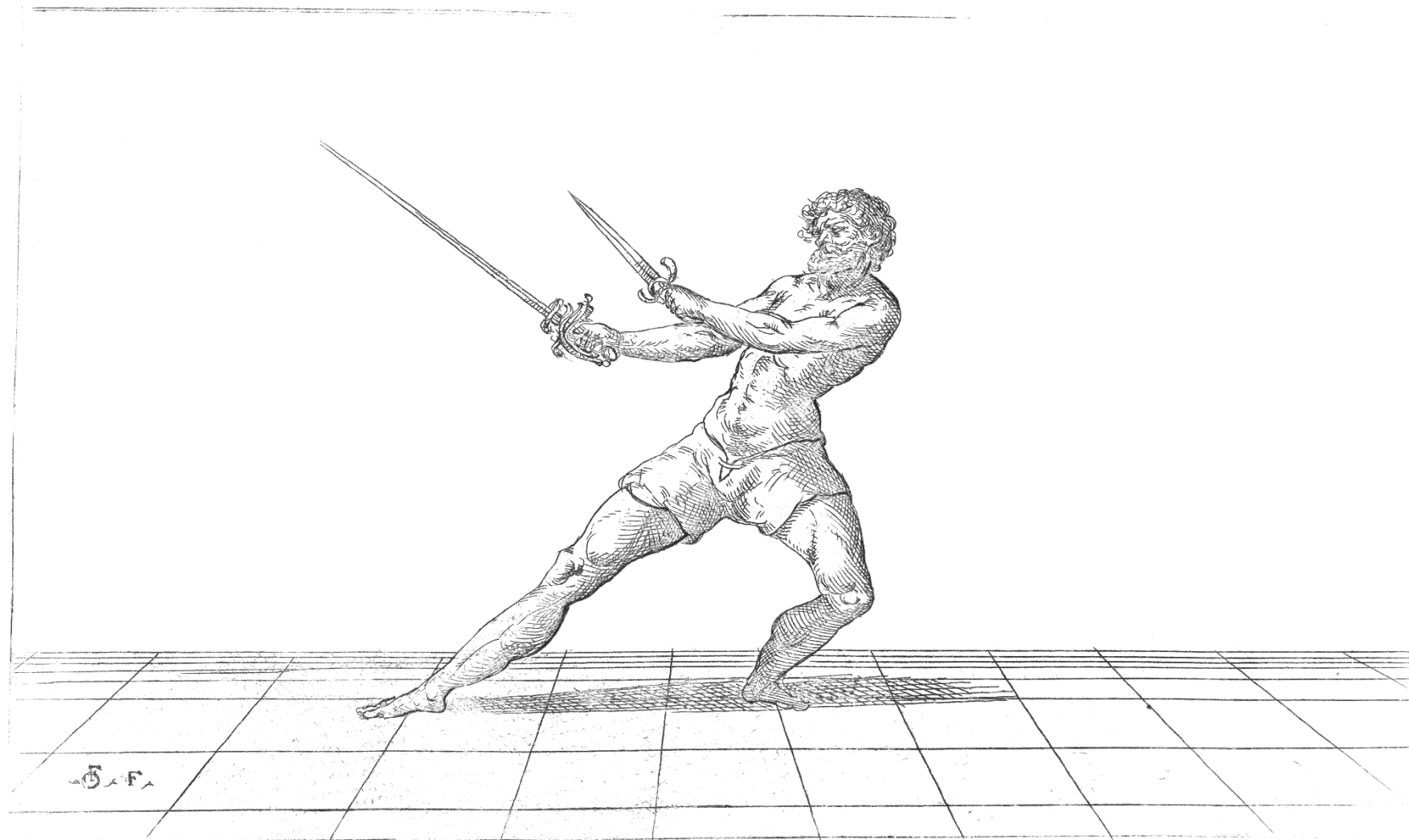


Figure 32



## ARTIFICIAL GUARD UNCOVERING THE CHEST

The chest is uncovered in this other guard so that your enemy cannot wound you on either the side of the sword or that of the dagger, because coming to wound you he will throw at your ribcage, that being the only thing uncovered. While he throws, parry and wound in the same tempo, either in the right shoulder or the face, these being closest to you. In this guard you can also perform feints, pass with your foot, or anything that you have learned in other guards. It is also good with the choleric, who throw resolutely and do not perform feints. | It is not to be used with those who have tempo and measure and know well how to throw a resolute thrust and a feint.<sup>85</sup> Instead, bind with the weapons and seek to cover the enemy's sword with yours outside of measure, where you can safely parry and wound according to the occasion.

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<sup>85</sup> *This is not to be used with an enemy who is an expert fencer.*

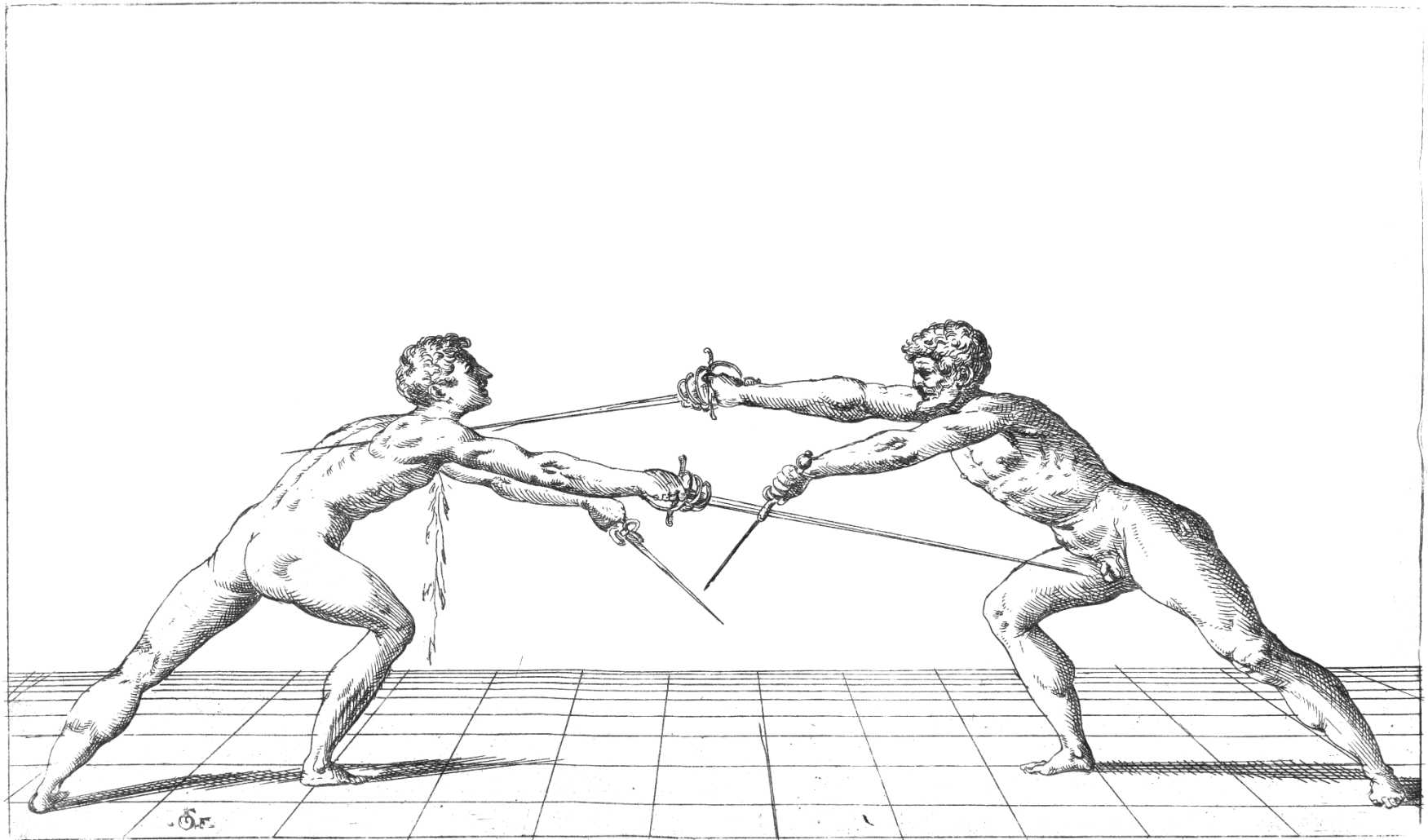


Figure 33

# THE FEINT WITH SWORD AND DAGGER

## IN ORDER TO WOUND OVER THE DAGGER

Just as the understanding of tempo and measure is the principal foundation of fencing, so the disengage and feint are its ornament. The disengage consists entirely in the wrist. The feint is showing the doing of one thing and not doing it. It is not possible to perform the feint without the disengage. One disengages above or under the guards of the sword, or over or under the point of the dagger, or inside or outside. I cannot discuss the feint without including the disengage. The feint is a deadly deception, almost unstoppable to persons of valour and experts of this science, dropping the “almost” with those of no understanding. It is performed in this way: At times, in order to strike with a stoccata over the dagger in the chest or face of the enemy, it is necessary to bind him with the sword low under the dagger, keeping your dagger guarding against his sword, and when you are at measure, throw a resolute stoccata and then return backward. Nothing more is required if you rush at him, but if he parries, bind him again and when you are at measure throw the thrust without extending your step, staying with the vita firm underneath the dagger. While the enemy moves to parry it, in his lowering of the dagger raise the point of your sword with a turn of your wrist and then, extending your step and vita, wound him in the chest or face, which he will certainly not perceive, as you see in the figure. To have the effect it needs to be done with great speed so that he will not know if it is resolute or feigned. Be advised that in going with the point of the sword above the enemy’s dagger you must advance with the disengage so that you have disengaged and wounded in the same tempo. Then, return outside of measure, as above, securing yourself from the enemy’s sword.

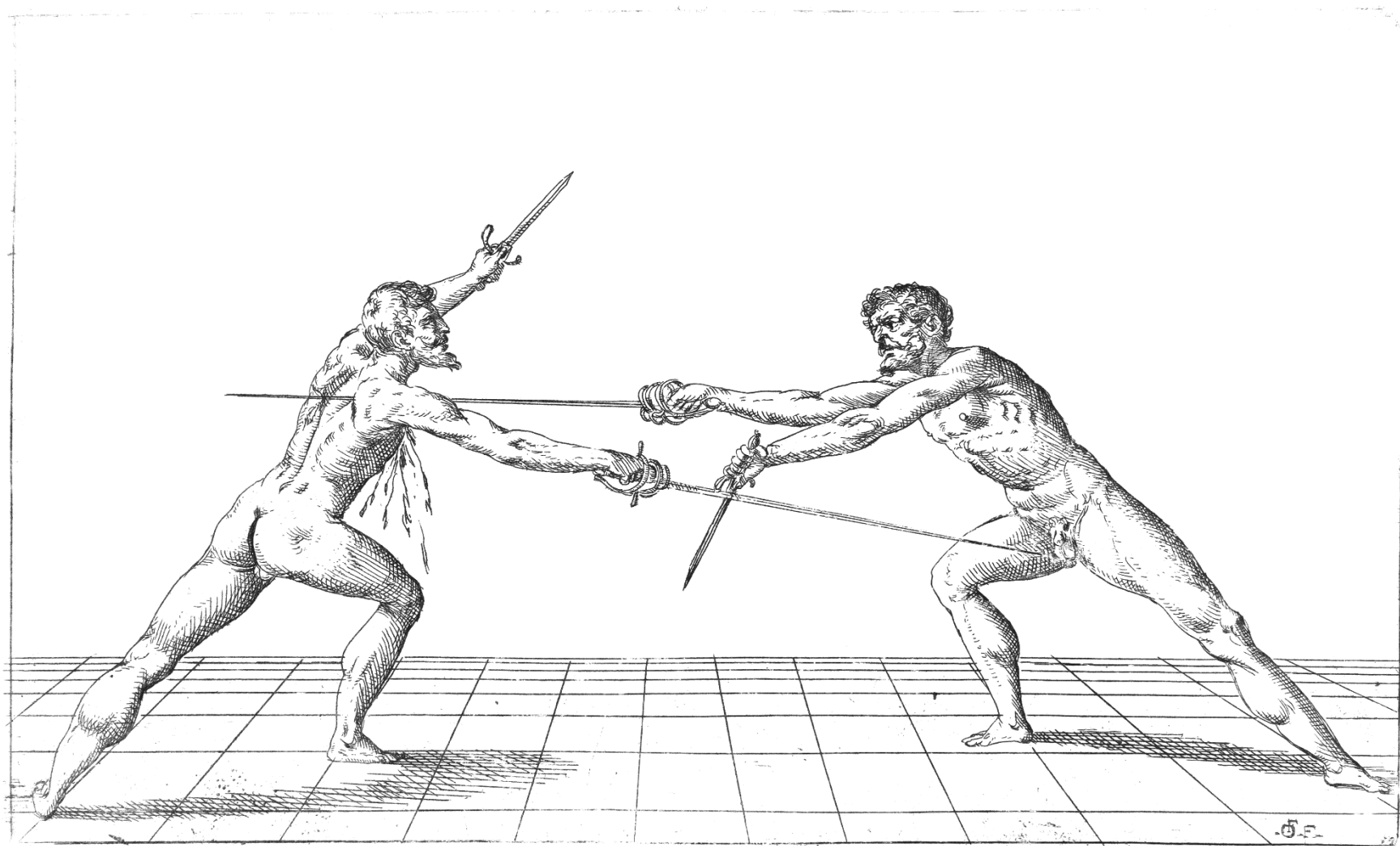


Figure 34

# THE FEINT

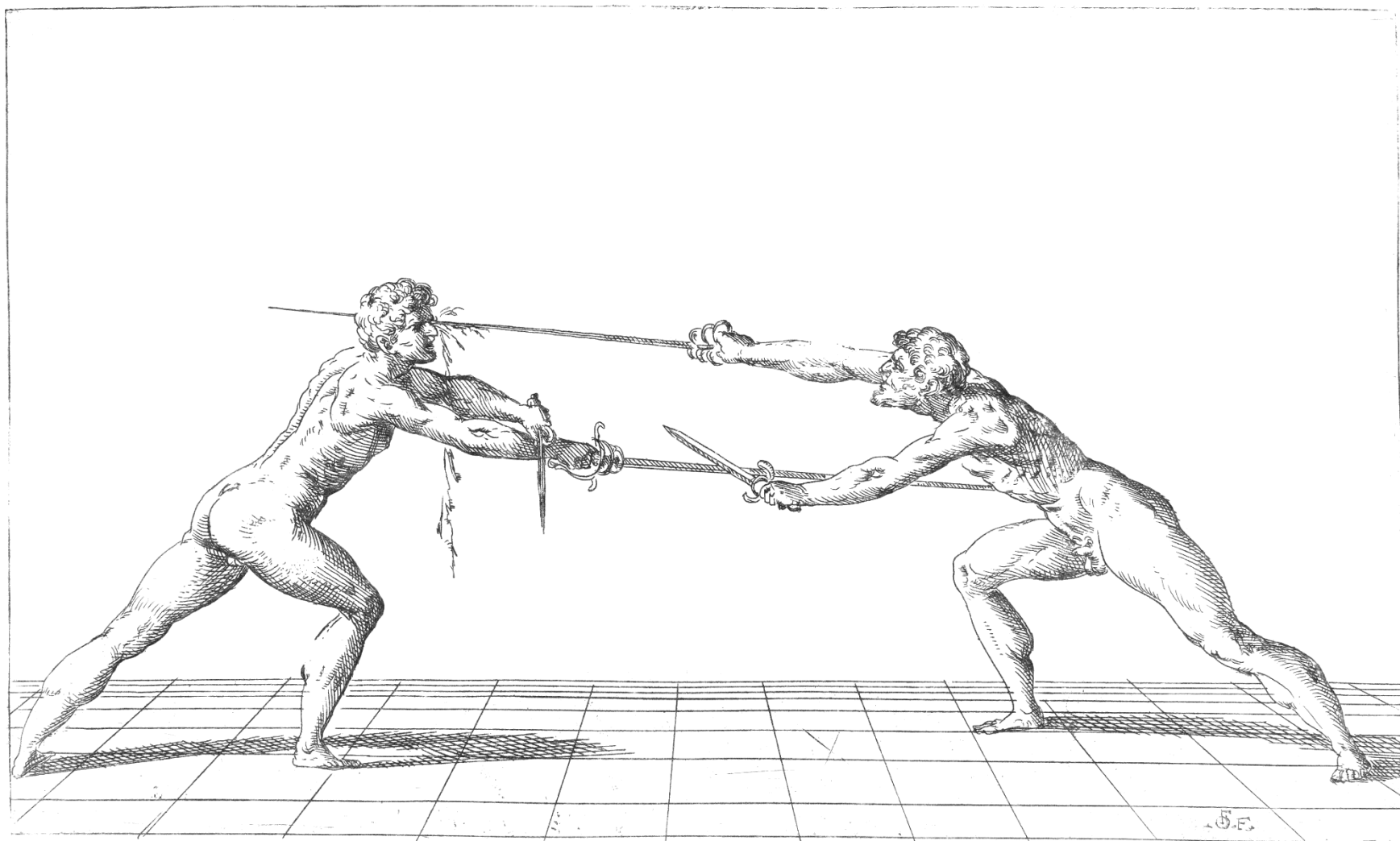
## WITH SWORD AND DAGGER

### IN ORDER TO WOUND THE CHEST

This feint is no different from the last, except that wounds over the dagger and this underneath. It is done with the same rule as the other. In this, you must hold the sword high and, when you have bound the enemy, throw a thrust at him over the dagger, raising your sword arm a little more. This method of wounding is called “Cutting the Dagger’s Throat”.<sup>86</sup> No more is required if he does not parry, but if he does, you must present the point to him, no more or less, standing with your pace and foot firm, and while attempts to parry, running with the point of the sword under the hilt of the dagger, turning your wrist and extending your pace, wound him in the chest, which he will not perceive. Then, return backward outside of measure, securing yourself as above.

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<sup>86</sup> “Scannare”—to slaughter or cut the throat of.



*Figure 35*

# THE FEINT WITH SWORD AND DAGGER AT THE FACE

*Disengaging the sword over the point of the dagger*

To strike your enemy's face with a stoccata at the onset, it is necessary to perform this feint which, as it is the most difficult, thus it is also the most beautiful. It is therefore necessary to bind the enemy on the sword side, holding the point toward his face on the right side, in order to see if he wants to wound or if he instead wishes to stand in guard in order to parry. If he is in guard, feign a thrust at his face, and as he goes into obedience with the dagger, turn the point of the sword over the enemy's dagger with your wrist and wound him, which he will not perceive, since in parrying he will completely uncover himself. Having struck with the thrust, do as above.

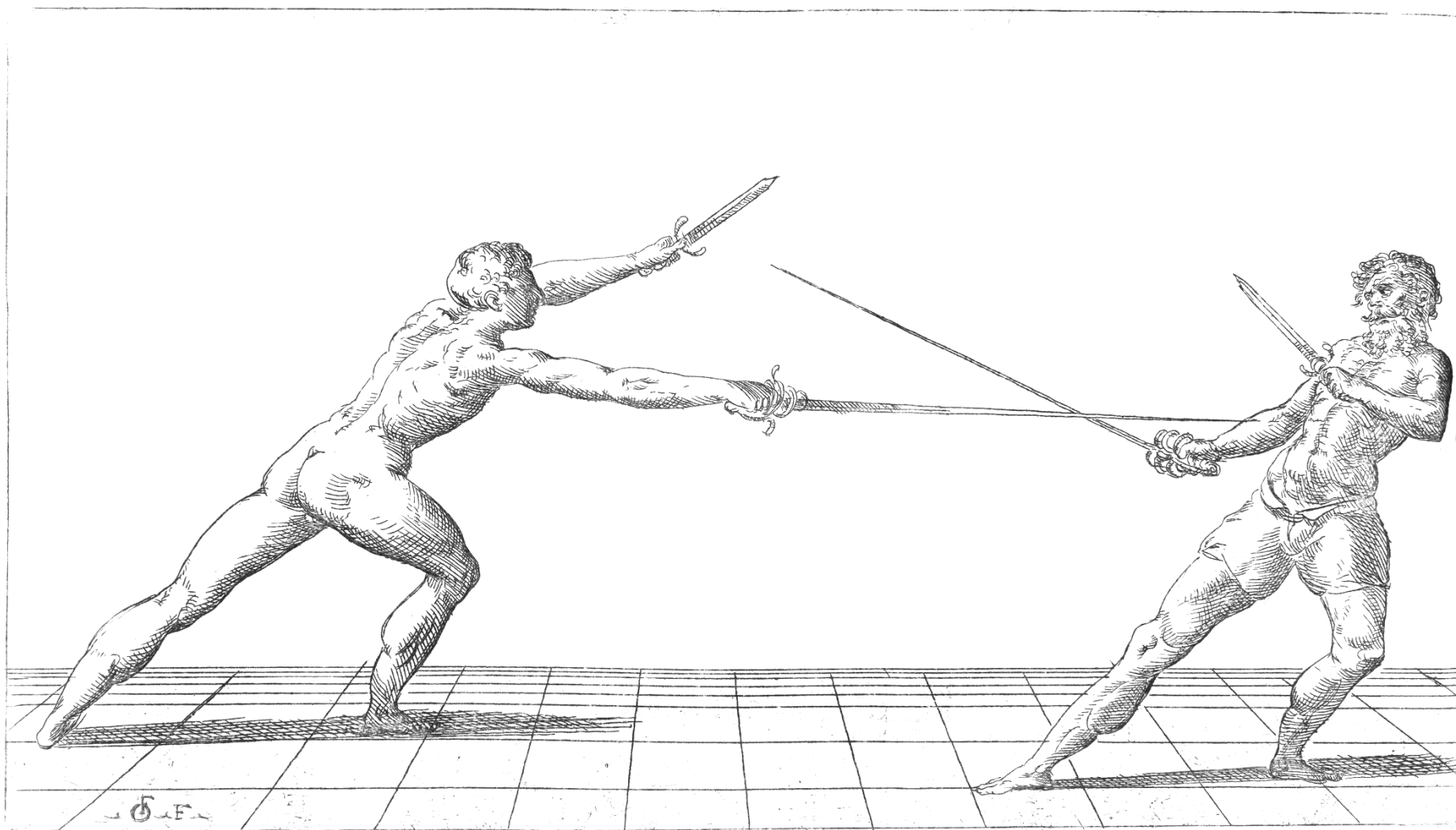


Figure 36



# PARRYING THE LONG STOCCATA WITH THE SWORD BY BRINGING

the vita back

It is such a necessity to be good at parrying that I hold knowing how to do so well to be the most important thing in this profession. Now I wish to teach you three ways to defend yourself from long stoccate. Stand in guard in the above way with the sword and vita forward, keeping the chest slightly uncovered, and stand either at measure or outside of measure, but not inside measure. Being at measure, when you see the stoccata being thrown at you, bring your vita backward and parry with the sword as you see in the figure. In the same tempo (because, pulling yourself backward, you escape away from the thrust of the enemy's sword slightly so that it does not reach you), he puts himself into disorder falling downward with his vita and it will be difficult for him to parry, whence you can lengthen your step to wound him and escape from him as above, taking care to stand strongly over your feet while you parry or return backward.

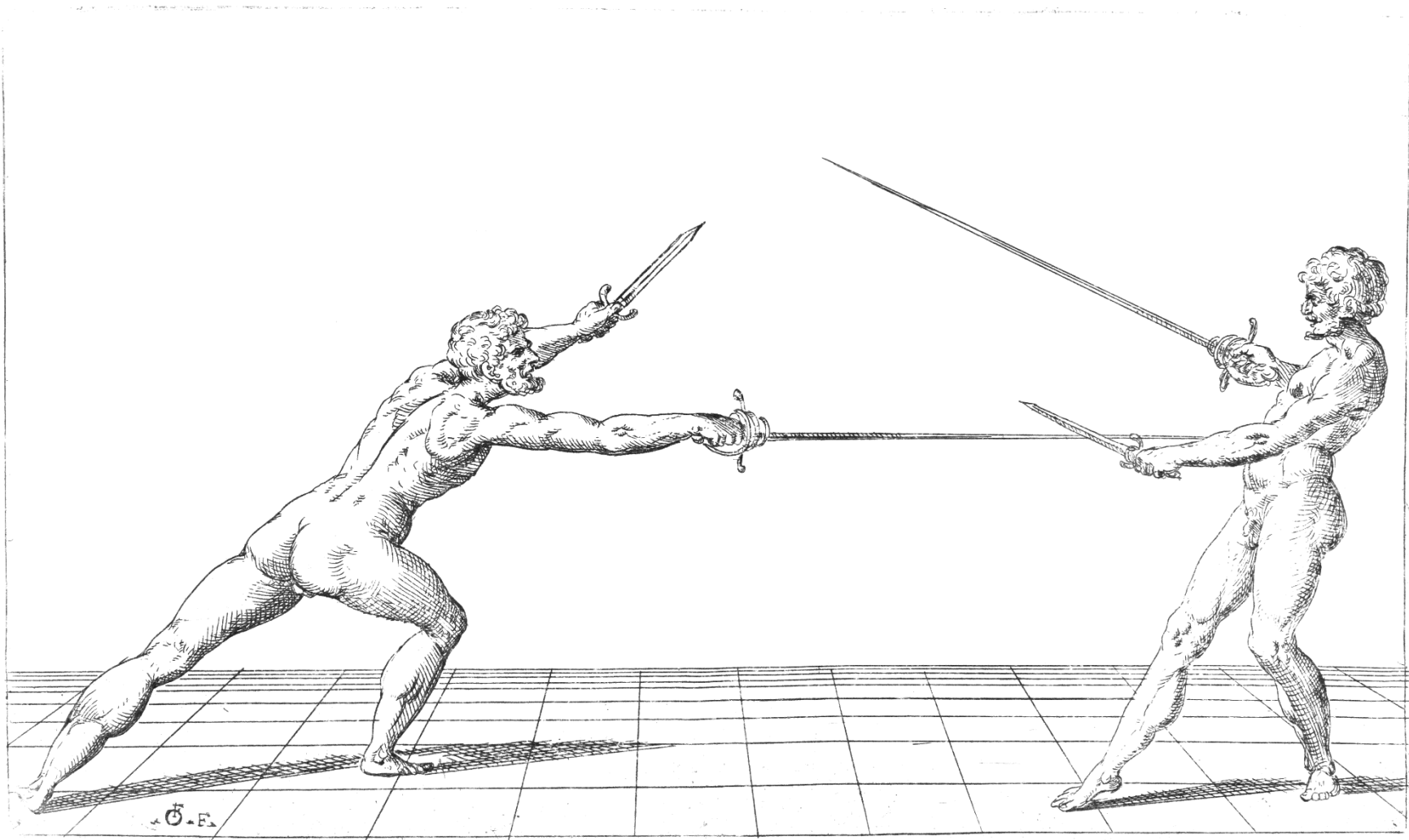


Figure 37

## PARRYING WITH THE DAGGER, BRINGING THE VITA BACK

Stand in the same guard as above, with the vita artificially forward, keeping the dagger guarding against the enemy's sword. When you are at measure and you see him throw the thrust at you, in the same tempo parry with the dagger and bring the vita back with a withdrawal of your forward leg, keeping the sword ready to wound, as you see in the figure. Standing with the feet strong and the sword free, you can do many things before he returns to guard, since he gives you an opportunity to do them by throwing long and falling with his vita.

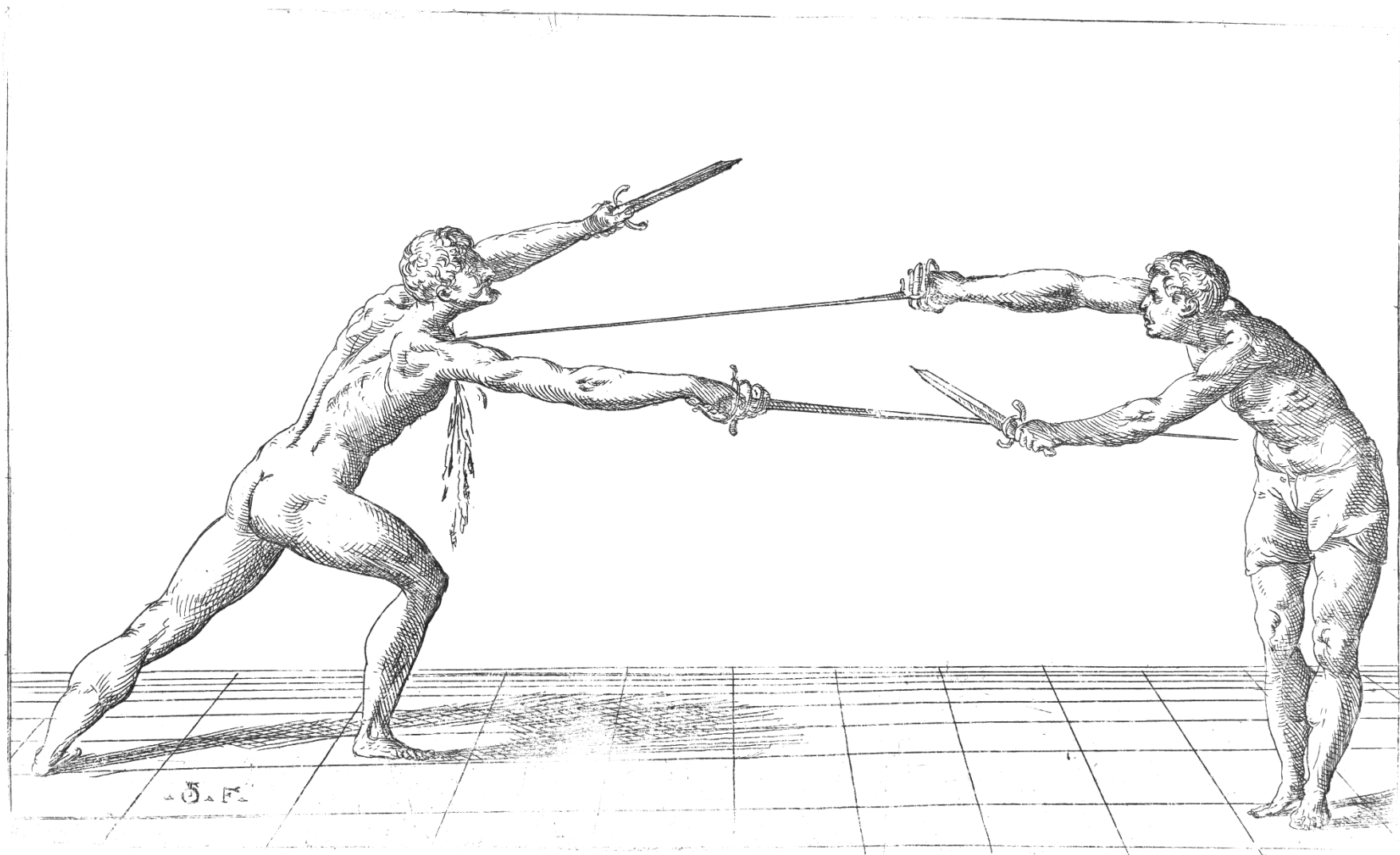


Figure 38

# PARRYING WITH THE DAGGER, BRINGING THE VITA BACK,

*and wounding with the sword in the same tempo*

Given that the previous two figures parried with the dagger, bringing the vita backward and then wounding, they show two tempi: One in parrying and the other in wounding. Therefore, I show you how to parry and wound in one tempo with this other figure of mine. The reason for bringing back the vita is that you disconcert the enemy and see your action better. Now then, place yourself in the same sword and dagger guard as above, with the vita bending your body forward. Forgo throwing when you are at measure, and when he throws at you it is necessary to do three things in one tempo—that is, parrying with the dagger, bringing the vita backward while pulling your front foot even with the rear, ending up curved with the body, and extending your arm, throwing the thrust at his chest. This method of parrying and wounding so deceives the enemy that it is impossible for him to defend himself. After this, return outside of measure and secure yourself as has been said.

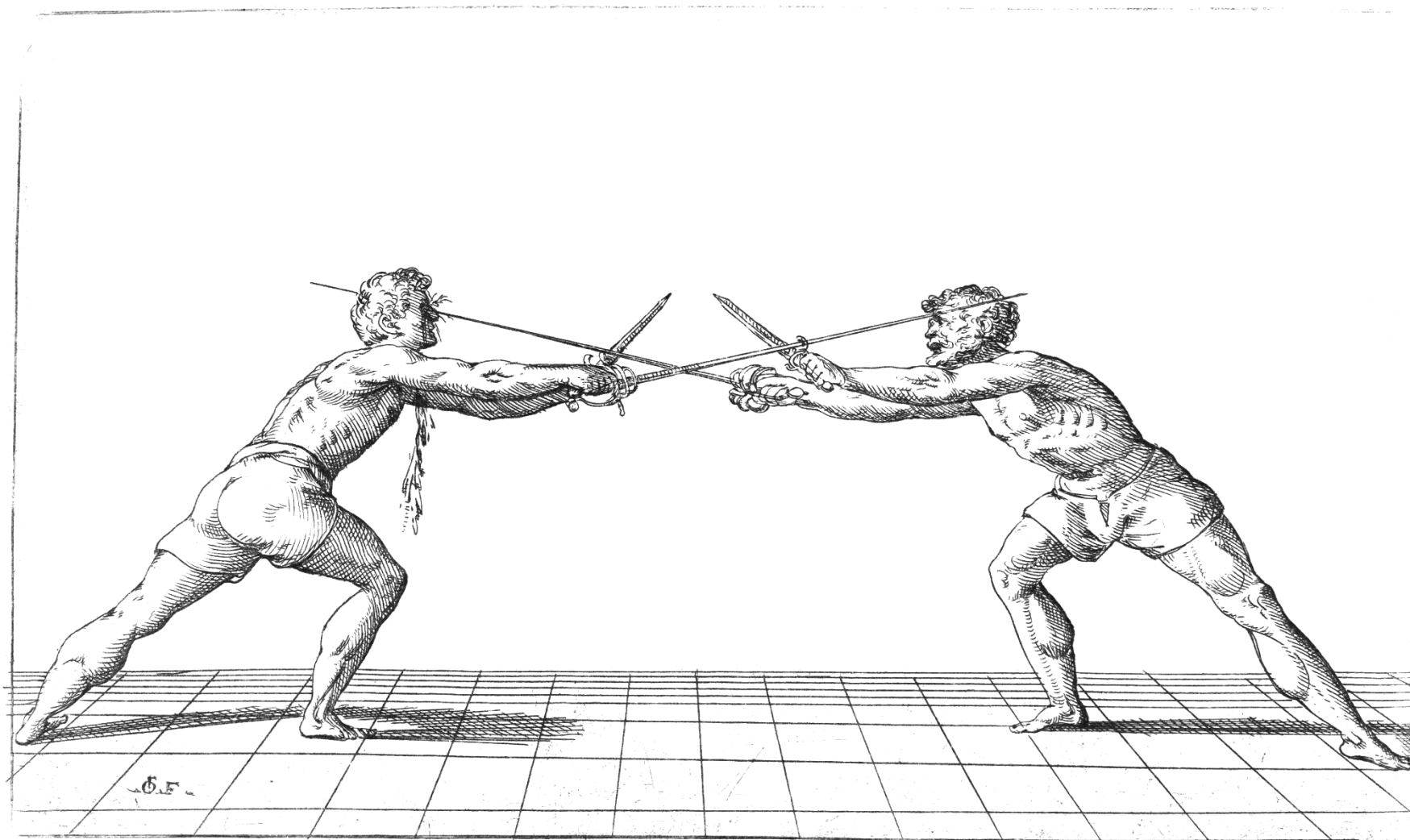


Figure 39

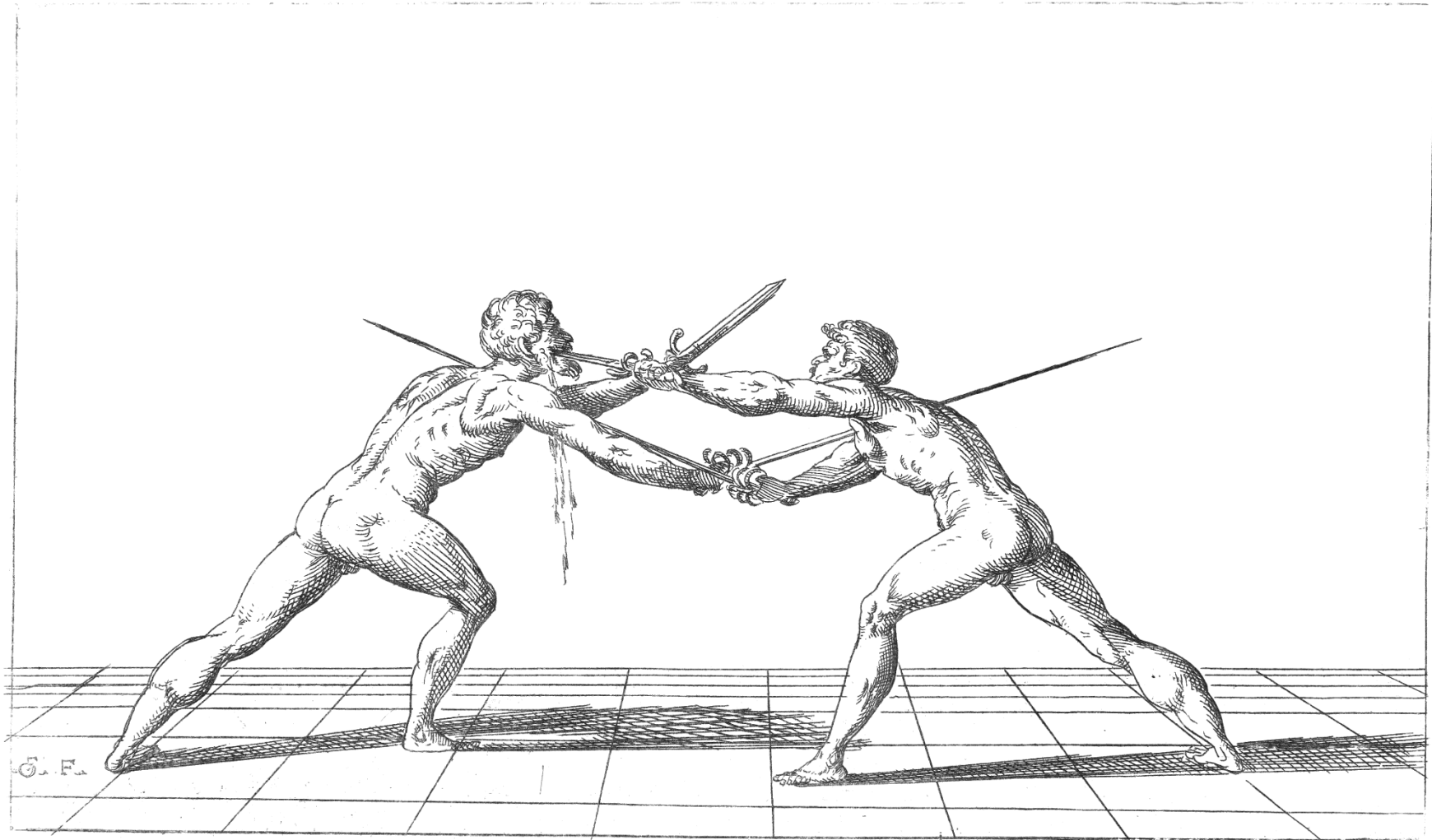
## THE THRUST AT THE FACE, PARRYING WITH THE SWORD

Demonstrated in this figure is a thrust of the firm foot that is very useful and beautiful to those that know how to employ it and practise doing so.<sup>87</sup> It is done in this way: If your enemy attempts to throw an imbroccata at your face, or a straight thrust instead, parrying with your sword, direct the point to the enemy's face in the same tempo so that, you throwing in the same tempo that he does, he will not be able to parry with the dagger in the same tempo. If he wishes to parry with the dagger, he will bash it into his sword and end up with the thrust in his face. This lesson only teaches how to wound him in the face—if you attempted to throw at his chest, he would be able to parry it with the dagger. To perform it with greater artifice so that you deceive even the knowledgeable, it is necessary to uncover your left side<sup>88</sup> and hold the dagger low, giving the enemy an opportunity so that he throws either at your face or over the dagger, which he will believe you will parry with the dagger. In the same tempo, parry with the forte of your sword and extend with your right foot, keeping the point of your sword toward his face, because if he attempts to parry, he bumps into his own sword and is unable to parry or wound, as in the figure. The thrust thrown, return backward outside of measure as above.

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<sup>87</sup> *Note: Wound the enemy with this beautiful method, although the figure does not show clearly how the sword fist must be in quarta.*

<sup>88</sup> *Note: If you uncover your right side in order for the enemy to ~~switch~~ arrive to throw at your right shoulder or arm, standing in terza you can parry strongly with the forte of your sword along the debole of the enemy, who is wounded by the resolute thrust.*



*Figure 40*



# THE PASS WITH SWORD AND DAGGER IN ORDER TO COME TO GRIPS

and wound the face with the dagger

Coming to grips and wounding with the dagger is done in many ways and according to the situations in which a person finds himself. Many who come to grips cannot do otherwise, as is the case when the enemy is furious in passing. Others, who do not have patience in playing at the point of the sword, pass out of choler. Others pass with artifice in order to wound with the dagger. In this, my first book, I will write on only one artificial pass for wounding safely with the dagger so that your enemy will not be able to offend you with either the sword or dagger. The pass is performed in this way: It is necessary to arrange yourself in guard in a way that you end up with your entire right side uncovered and give the enemy an opportunity so that he throws resolutely, either by thrust or cut. You will then parry with your sword, passing with your foot, strongly affront his sword with yours, and put your sword inside his dagger arm, as you see in the figure, for the reason that your enemy will not be able to move either the sword or the dagger and you will be able to give him as many dagger wounds as you like.<sup>89</sup> This lesson will be very safe for someone who has practised it.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> *Note!*

<sup>90</sup> *Note!*

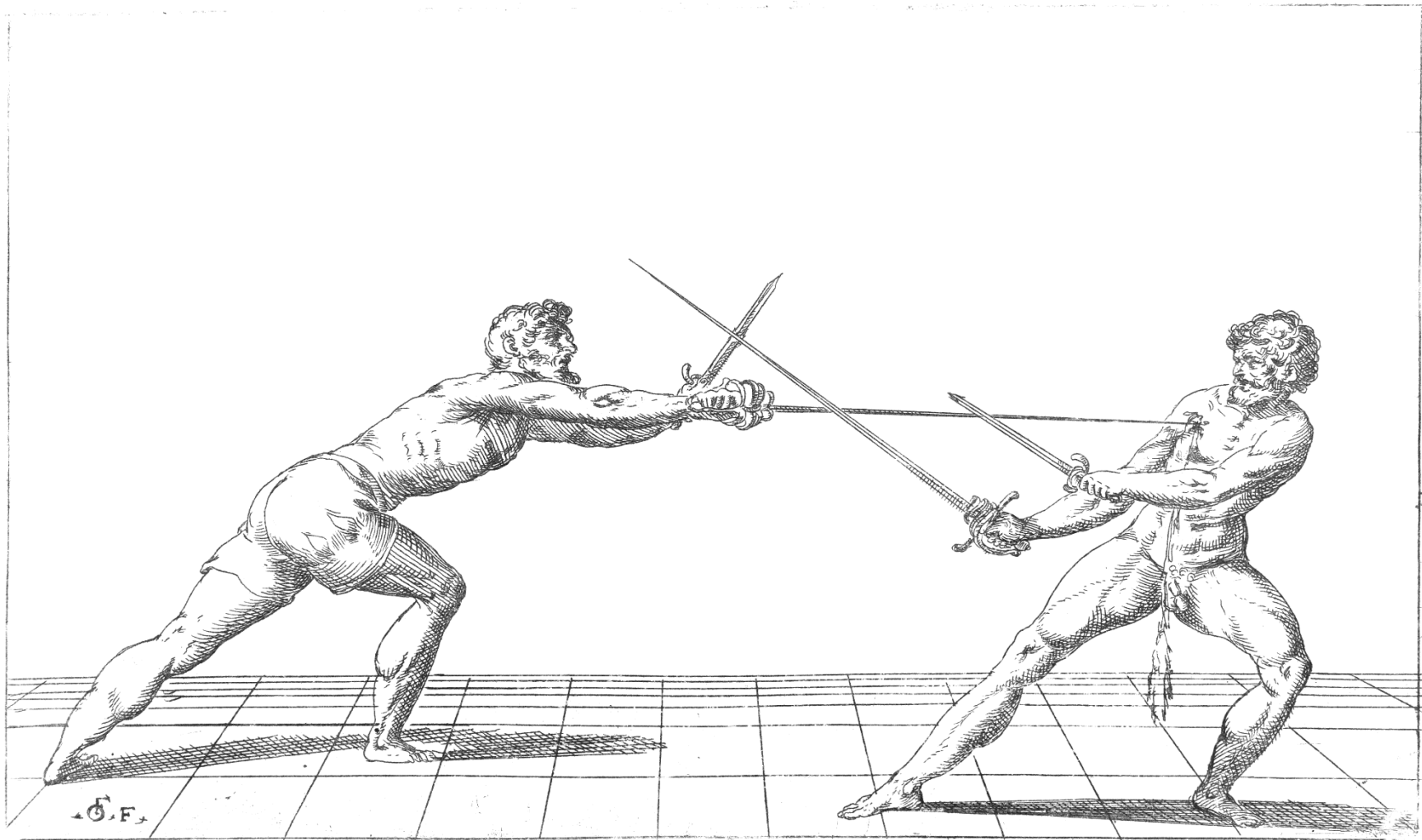


Figure 41

# THE THRUST WITH THE SWORD AND DAGGER THROWN ON THE SIDE of the right shoulder

Someone who wishes to be a valiant man in this profession will never place himself in guard<sup>91</sup> but, standing well outside of measure instead, will consider the enemy's guard and approach to bind him little by little where he is uncovered. When he is at measure, he will throw according to the method of the present figure in which the enemy's right shoulder is uncovered, taking care to approach to bind him on the side of the sword.<sup>92</sup> If he sees that the enemy stands in guard in order to wait, he will throw the stoccata strongly in the described way, turning the wrist on the side of the enemy's sword, as seen.<sup>93</sup> After the stoccata is thrown, return outside of measure as above.

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<sup>91</sup> *If you can, it is good to first see what guard the enemy is in so as to then place yourself advantageously in the counterguard.*

<sup>92</sup> *Bind on the side of the sword—that is, you, in terza, will control that of the enemy standing to your outside.*

<sup>93</sup> *One turns the wrist and wounds toward the enemy's sword.*

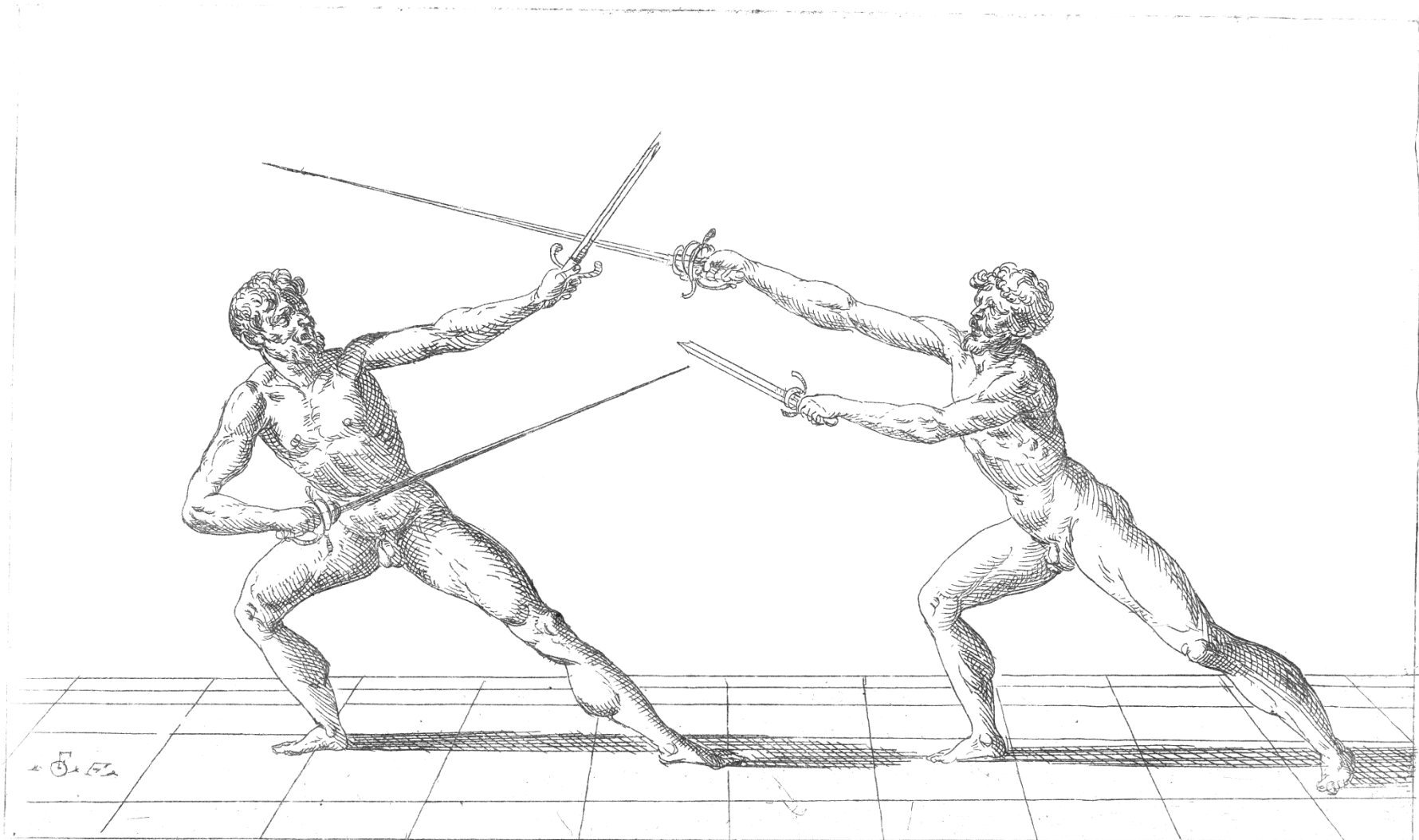


Figure 42

# PASSING WITH THE FOOT WITH SWORD AND DAGGER

In my first book, this figure serves as nothing more than a demonstration. In others that I will publish, God willing, I will discuss passes<sup>94</sup> of sword and dagger—that is, passing with the foot—since in this only firm-footed was discussed. This is because, if one knows how to take the tempo, all that is done firm-footed can be done with a pass of the foot. | After the pass is done,<sup>95</sup> it is necessary to know how to disengage the sword and then escape, as you see in this figure where he passed, disengaged the sword, and can safely give the enemy as many stoccate as he likes, holding the enemy's sword with his dagger. If the enemy were to disengage the sword, it would be necessary to follow it with the dagger while wounding with the sword and, when you have given the stoccate that you wish, return backward outside of measure. Someone who knows how to take the tempo well and pass with the foot but does not know how to disengage the sword can be said to know nothing since, in passing, even though he wounds, he finds himself in danger with respect to the enemy, who still will attempt to perform his blow. This is because courageous ones are found who, though wounded, yet wish to avenge themselves. Thus infuriated, they throw in the worst possible way, and you can still end up wounded or dead. Even if, in passing, your enemy were to parry the stoccata, you would find yourself in very great danger if you did not know how to disengage the sword and were you not to know how to fight at half-sword,<sup>96</sup> as you see in the figure, and return backward and escape as I, Our Lord God willing, will discuss in my other books.

*THE END*

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<sup>94</sup> *Passing—that is, carrying the left foot forward with a step.*

<sup>95</sup> *The pass done, it is necessary to know how to disengage the sword & keep that of the enemy controlled with your dagger.*

<sup>96</sup> *Someone who passes must know how to play at half-sword.*

First Chapter at page 15 deals generally with the guards and counterguards

1. Says that one must be arranged in a just pace, narrow rather than long, and this is in order to extend.
2. Hold the sword and dagger strong in your hands.
3. The dagger is held now high, now low, now extended.
4. The sword is held now high, now low, now on the right side, always ready to parry and wound so that the enemy, throwing either a thrust or a cut, can be parried and wounded in the same tempo.
5. What was said to advise that the dagger must guard the enemy's sword, because if the enemy throws, you parry.
6. Your sword always points at the part the enemy holds uncovered so that, throwing at the enemy, he ends up wounded.
7. You will use placing yourself in guard uncovered when you wish to affect the enemy so that he throws at you, so that he disorders himself in throwing and gives you the opportunity to throw at him and wound him, which he would not have without you being uncovered thus.
8. As for the counterguards, someone who is an expert never places himself in guard but seeks to place himself in the counterguards.
9. Wishing to be in the counterguards, it must be done by placing oneself outside of measure, outside of measure means when you are so distant that the enemy cannot arrive at you due to you and he being so distant that you cannot reach with any ~~tempo~~ blow, either thrust or cut.
10. You will stand with the sword and dagger high and the vita strong, with the pace firm and balanced.
11. Then you will consider the enemy's guard and proceed to bind him little by little with the sword—that is, placing yourself so as to secure yourself from his sword—which is done by resting your sword over his, holding your thumb in the hilt over the spine of its sword so that you will thusly be able to press better over that of the enemy so that he cannot throw a blow if he does not disengage and, if he disengages, he produces two tempi, then gives you tempo to wound him if you are quick to throw while he is delayed in the disengage.
12. If the adversary changes guard it is necessary that you follow him with the sword forward and the dagger extended, thus always securing yourself from his sword because, him desiring to free himself from it, he agrees to disengage and, while he does so, you can wound him in the same tempo and he cannot ~~wound him~~ wound you if not with two tempi—one that he produces in disengaging, and the other in attempting to strike, which you will very easily parry.

1. The measure is said to be “at measure” when you are so close that it is not necessary for you to approach him more in order to arrive at and be able to wound him—that is, to reach him with the thrust or cut—so that you will attempt to throw at him with just extension of your right foot.

2. “Outside of measure” is when you cannot reach him, nor can he arrive to wound you due to being so distant that the blows cannot extend.

The tempo is then recognized—that is, if the enemy is in guard it is necessary that you place yourself outside of measure and then proceed in guard, approaching him as said and securing yourself from his sword with yours, which is done proceeding extending forward with the right foot and stealing ground with the left so that, always standing well and strongly on your feet, you advance in guard binding toward the enemy and placing your sword over his, holding yours the right edge of yours on top, your thumb in the hilt of yours over the edge.

If the enemy disengages, you are in tempo to wound him while he does so.

If he changes guard, while he changes is a tempo to wound him.

If he turns, while he turns is a tempo to wound him.

If he binds in order to come to measure, while he binds and advances and before he comes to measure is a tempo to wound him.

If he throws you parry, and in the same tempo parry and throw, which is a tempo to wound him.

If he stands still in order to wait, you will approach to bind him and when you are at measure is a tempo to throw at him where he is uncovered.



Note: While he moves, he cannot wound because a motion of his is an impediment so that he cannot make another in the same tempo.<sup>97</sup>

At page 18      There is the figure that shows how one throws the longest stoccata and that, in withdrawing from the thrust, first the head is withdrawn, then the body and foot follow immediately, thus one withdraws quickly and easily, which does not occur if the foot is withdrawn first because the head ends up in danger of being wounded.

At page 20      A stands in guard and presses B’s sword. It is called “on the inside” because A presses with the edge of his sword that of B, covering it such that I will say by holding the hand in mandritto, and B in the same toward A

At page 21      A covers B’s sword with the edge, holding his hand in riverso—that is, as if he had thrown a riverso—and B does the same to A, which is called “on the outside”.

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<sup>97</sup> This group of notes refers to the chapter TEMPO AND MEASURE.

- At page 54*      *He wants you to approach with your left hand, to be cautious that the enemy's sword cannot wound you, and to stand in order to parry.  
How if it were held with the dagger guarding the enemy's sword, you certainly do not take the enemy sword.  
It must be understood that where he says "on the guard" he does not want you to infer "on the hilt" but toward the blade because your hand is thus entangled by his sword and does not let go when you throw and pass with the left foot.*
- At page 75*      *He says that you throw while the enemy has his foot "in varying"—that is, is in the act of moving it<sup>98</sup>—because if you throw in such a tempo, he cannot wound you due to being impeded by his own motion because he cannot make two motions in the same tempo.*
- At the single sword*      *At Page 48 Deals with the inquartate and voids, and does 4 lessons, two are with standing at the onset in the guard called terza with the sword outside and then you disengage and wound on the inside, turning your wrist to quarta and arm to seconda, as in the figure.  
  
But the second lesson wants your wrist in quarta guard, your hand raised and your point under the pommel of the enemy's sword, and makes your sword hang as if wounding with an imbroccata, and this is a reverse imbroccata with a void of the vita as in the figure.  
  
The third inquartata makes the same motions, guard, and wounding, but strikes with artifice, and is said to be the most beautiful and safest.  
  
The fourth inquartata is opposite to the previous three because this is placed in the guard called quarta and disengages and wounds with the wrist in terza, and the void will be done by carrying the vita to your left side, and such occurs comfortably by extending the left step, and by seizing his hilt with your left hand you will give him the stoccate you wish.*
- At page 49 it shows how one must operate against someone who throws resolutely and like a beast, and how one must wound such a person in two tempi.*

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<sup>98</sup> As discussed in a footnote at the cited page, "in varia" are the words used in the original text. Regardless of whether it should read "in varia" or "in aria", the annotator and translator have both come to the same interpretation of Giganti's meaning.



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